THE WRESTLING PRESS

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Special Christmas / New Year Edition

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"You'll find sympathy in the dictionary between shit and suicide."
RODDY PIPER

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World News

▪ by Mike Aldren

Courtesy of
THE WRESTLING GLOBE Newsletter

On December 13, at the TLC: Tables, Ladders & Chairs pay-per-view, Sheamus defeated John Cena in a tables match to win the WWE Championship.

The Bret Hart references during Raw is likely the start of a long term storyline that could lead to Bret vs. Vince McMahon at Wrestlemania 26, but not necessarily in a wrestling match. Dave Meltzer is reporting that Bret has signed a short-term contract with WWE which runs from January 1, 2010 to April 10th. Bret has stated in several recent interviews that he is open to the idea of appearing again on WWE television in a non-wrestling role. As far as doing the guest host deal we don't know he has agreed to anything in that regard, but a Bret Hart appearance on January 4, his first Raw appearance in 12 years, against Impact would surely be a blow to TNA's chances of making a dint in WWE ratings... We also know now that there is a Hart Foundation DVD in the works.

Shawn Michaels has challenged Undertaker to a rematch at Wrestlemania 26.

Former WWE wrestler Ken Doane (Kenny Dykstra), 23, is part of an upcoming reality show called Seducing Cindy. The premise is former Playboy model Cindy Margolis, 44, as "America's sexiest cougar" looking for love with 25 guys from all walks of life competing for her affection. The show premieres on the Fox Reality Channel on January 30. Ken Doane is probably best remembered as part of the Spirit Squad that had a brief run in the WWE. He was also at one-time engaged to Mickie James.

Matt Hardy totalled his Dad's truck recently and posted photos of the damage on his Twitter page.

Ricky Steamboat Jr, the son of The Dragon, was offered a developmental deal with WWE. He hasn't officially signed yet as all new talents are subject to a battery of Wellness tests. He is planning to relocate to Tampa and start with FCW in January. Several independent promoters have noted he is a great kid with a good head on his shoulders. Dusty Rhodes, through a mutual friend of ours, described him as "a puppy with big claws" meaning he's going to be big, but doesn't know how big. Steamboat, 22, was trained by George South and later with Harley Race at his school in Eldon, MO and recently completed tours in Puerto Rico and in Japan with Pro Wrestling NOAH.

Booker T has told people here he is coming to WWE soon, perhaps at the Royal Rumble in January.

Hogan was a guest on TSN's Off The record where he told a story about his first ever night in the WWF. He claimed the boys ribbed him that if he didn't give Pat Paterson oral sex after the show everyone was going to "gang rape" him. After his match, he went to the back and was ready to fight, but realised it was all a big rib and was greeted with cheers and a beer bath.

As well as Hogan debuting on TNA's live Impact this Monday 4th January, expect a host of other possible appearances from Rob Van Dam, Scott Hall, Ric Flair and the usual Hogan cohorts.

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STATE OF INDEPENDENTS

| By STEVE ASHFIELD (News Editor) - mageditoruk@googlemail.com |

American Indy News

On November 13th in Michigan, Austin Aries beat Davey Richards by stoppage to keep his ROH World Title, Kevin Steen and El Generico beat The Young Bucks, Chris Hero beat Roderick Strong to take his number one spot in the Pick 6 list, The Briscoe Brothers beat The House of Truth, Tyler Black got a win over Claudio Castagnoli and Kenny Omega beat Katsuhiko Nakajima.

The next day in Mississauga, Ontario, Colt Cabana won a four-way against Grizzly Redwood, Delirious and Claudio Castagnoli, Kenny King and Rhett Titus beat The Super Smash Brothers, Katsuhiko Nakajima defeated El Generico, Tyler Black went to a 20-minute draw with Roderick Strong, Joey Ryan and Erick Stevens beat The Briscoes, Kevin Steen beat Chris Hero and ROH World Champion Austin Aries beat Kenny Omega.

On December 18th in Manassas results included Kenny Omega beating Rhett Titus and Chris Hero beating Colt Cabana in Pick 6 matches, The Young Bucks defeated Austin Aries and Kenny King, Roderick Strong beat Tyler Black and the team of Rocky Romero and The Briscoe Brothers beat The

The Briscoes

American Wolves and Alex Koslov (The Briscoes and The Wolves brawled to the back leaving Koslov to be pinned by Romero).

ROH held 'Final Battle 2009' in New York on December 19th and Austin Aries ended the year still the ROH World Champion after a sixty minute draw with Tyler Black. Also on the card The Briscoe Brothers regained the World Tag titles beating The American Wolves, Eddie Kingston beat Chris Hero in a Fight Without Honor, Claudio Castagnoli beat Rhett Titus, Colt Cabana and Kenny Omega in a Pick 6 Four Corner Survival match, The Embassy beat Delirious and Bobby Dempsey, Jack Evans defeated Teddy Hart, Kenny

King beat Roderick Strong and The Young Bucks got the win over Kevin Steen and El Generico.

2010 starts with the next set of ROH on HDNet TV tapings at the Arena in Philadelphia on January 8th and 9th followed by an appearance at the Wrestle Reunion 4 convention at Hilton Los Angeles Airport with Jerry Lynn taking on Kenny King and also due to appear is Jushin 'Thunder' Liger.

CHIKARA held their last two shows of the year in late November. In Easton on November 21st Tim Donst beat Hydra in a Loser Leaves CHIKARA match, Jigsaw defeated Gran Akuma, The Colony beat Vin Gerard, STIGMA and Colin Delaney, Dasher Hatfield and Sugar Dunkerton defeated F.I.S.T. and The Order of the Neo-Solar Temple beat Claudio Castagnoli, Mike Quackenbush and Jorge Rivera.

The following day in Philadelphia The Colony beat The Osirian Portal in a CHIKARA Campeonatos de Parejas match, Player Dos beat Lince Dorado to keep his Young Lions Cup, Claudia Castagnoli beat Eddie Kingston in a Respect match, F.I.S.T. beat Mike Quackenbush and Jorge Rivera and Player Uno beat Tim Donst. Both these shows are available to buy at www.smartvideo.com.

Season Nine of CHIKARA is taking shape and begins with 'A Touch of Class' at the Arena in Philadelphia on January 31st. That's followed by 'The Mint Condition' on February 27th at the Goodwill Fire Assn. Hall in Reading, PA. The King of Trios tournament has been confirmed for the Arena in Philadelphia running from April 23-25 with tickets on sale from January 1st. More info at www.chikarapro.com

EVOLVE is a partnership between Gabe Sapolsky, Davey Richards and Sal Hamaoui and makes its debut at the Rahway Rec. Center on January 16th with the main event seeing Davey Richards take on Kota Ibushi.

Also confirmed is Mike Quackenbush, Jigsaw and Hallowicked vs. Gran Akuma, Icarus and Brodie Lee, TJP v Munenori Sawa and Chuck Taylor v Cheech with Brad Allen, Arik Cannon, Chris Dickinson, Ken Doane, Bobby Fish, Johnny Gargano, Kyle O'Reilly, Ricochet and Silas Young , Aeroform and Dark City Fight Club confirmed to appear.

IWA-MS made their return on November 20th just months after holding their last show.

Dixieland Destroyer beat Ian Rotten, Ninja Bill defeated Neil Diamond Cutter, Soul Touchas beat The Hooligans, OMG beat Dan the Man, Osiris beat Necro Butcher and Jason Hades defeated Sal Thomaselli. Dingo was stripped of the IWA-MS World Heavyweight title and there'll be a 32-man tournament in the new year to crown a new champion.

In Litchfield on December 4th, Tyler Black beat Sal Thomaselli, Jimmy Jacobs made Matt Sydal submit, Dixieland Destroyer defeated Ian Rotten and Poodoo the Cow beat Gary Jay. The December 12th show due to take place in Addison was cancelled, the next show is back at the Litchfield Community Center on January 2nd.

PWG crowned a new World Champion when they held the Battle of LA tournament on November 20th and 21st.

The first round saw Scott Lost defeat LTP, Brandon Gatson got the better of Nick Jackson, Human

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Tornado beat Matt Jackson, Joey Ryan beat Colt Cabana, Roderick Strong defeated Johnny Goodtime, Brian Kendrick eliminated Austin Aries, Kenny Omega got the better of Kevin Steen and Alex Shelley beat El Generico.

The tournament concluded the following night and in the second round Joey Ryan beat Brian Kendrick, Kenny Omega defeated Scott Lost, Brandon Gatson beat Alex Shelley and Roderick Strong pinned Human Tornado. The semi-finals saw wins for Omega over Ryan and Strong over Gatson and the final was won by Kenny Omega who beat Roderick Strong to become the new PWG World Heavyweight Champion. Also on the card The Young Bucks beat Kevin Steen and El Generico to retain their PWG tag titles. After the match he called out The Young Bucks to celebrate with him but rather than do that they attacked him before El Generico and Colt Cabana made the save. Brian Kendrick raced to the ring and attacked the new champion

Colt Cabana © Tony Knox - www.tonyknox.org.uk

Next up is 'Kurt Russellmania' at the Wrestlerunion 4 event at the LAX Hilton on January 30th. Super Crazy makes his PWG debut and confirmed is El Generico v Jushin 'Thunder' Liger with Keiji Mutoh will also be appearing.

Insanity Pro Wrestling held 'Hardcore Holiday' in Indianapolis on December 5th with Scotty Vortekz beating Appollo Starr to win the IPW Heavyweight title.

Mid-American Champion Jesse Emerson beat Chrisjen Hayme to retain his belt and tag champions Irish Airborne beat The Kosher Klub. The next IPW show is 'Animosity' in Indianapolis on January 2nd with Scotty Vortekz defending his World Heavyweight title against Appollo Star, Drake Younger takes on JC Bailey in a number one contenders match and Davey Richards gets a shot at the Mid American title held by Jesse Emerson with former WWE star Seven Thorn also due to appear.

ISPW hold 'Seasons Beatings' in Freehold on December 26th with Sunny as the guest GM.

The main event is a Money in The Bank Ladder match featuring Crowbar, Nunzio, Danny Inferno, Ace Darling, Danny Doring and Chase Del Monte. ISPW World Heavyweight Champion Judas Young puts his title on the line against Tri-State Champion Rob Eckos, ISPW GM Nicholas Nice takes on Baby Hughie who'll have Nunzio in his corner and if Nice loses he's fired. Also confirmed is The Logan Brothers facing each other and Vito takes on Nicky Benz who'll have to wear a dress if he loses.

The Dragon Gate USA Open The Freedom Gate Championship Tournament was held at The Arena in Philadelphia on November 28th and the first round saw Gran Akuma defeat Nick Jackson, Matt Jackson, Lince Dorado, Johnny Gargano and Hallowicked, BxB Hulk beat Brian Kendrick, CIMA beat Mike Quackenbush, Super Crazy and Skayde and YAMATO defeated Davey Richards.

The four-way elimination final saw victory for BxB Hulk, the order of elimination was CIMA, Gran Akuma and YAMATO. After the match the new champion was attacked by Davey Richards and YAMATO before Dragon Kid made the save. Also on the card Jigsaw beat Eddie Kingston and the team of Masato Yoshino and Naruki Doi beat Dragon Kid and Shingo.

The next show is at the Congress Theater in Chicago on January 23rd and Open the Freedom Gate Champion BxB Hulk defends his title against Dragon Kid, CIMA and Super Crazy face Mike Quackenbush

and Jigsaw and there's a three-way elimination match as Shingo and YAMATO take on The Young Bucks and Masato Yoshino and Naruki Doi. Also due to appear are Jimmy Jacobs; Brian Kendrick; Masaaki Mochizuki; Jon Moxley; Davey Richards; Gran Akuma; Silas Young; Arik Cannon; Kyle O'Reilly FIP World Heavyweight Champion Masaaki Mochizuki and the Bonus match for Golden Circle and Stage ticket holders sees Silas Young make a defence of his AAW Heavyweight title.

Dragon Gate USA have also announced two shows at the Celebrity Theatre in Phoenix on March 26th and 27th 2010. Davey Richards and The Young Bucks are already confirmed for the shows that take place over WrestleMania weekend. More info at www.dgusa.tv

German company WxW will make their US debut on March 13th when they hold 'Vision' at The Arena in Philadelphia.

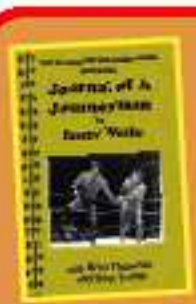
The main event sees Thumbtack Jack defend his CZW Ultraviolent Underground title against Drake Younger in a 'Pain in the Glas' match. Also confirmed to appear so far are Alex Shelley, Sami Callihan, Bad Bones. Tickets are available at www.czwrestling.com and more info at www.wxw-wrestling.com.

CZW held 'Cage of Death XI' on December 12th at The Arena in Philadelphia.

Drake Younger beat Devon Moore to keep his CZW World Heavyweight title and now meets B-Boy next month. The Cage of Death match saw Sami Callihan beat Danny Havoc but he was attacked after the match by The Necro Butcher. Greg Excellent won the CZW World Junior Heavyweight title beating Drew Blood, Tyler Veritas beat Adam Cole to become the first ever CZW Wired TV Champion, Jon Moxley secured himself a shot at the CZW World title in February beating B-Boy, Eddie Kingston and Egotistico Fantastico, BLKOUT won a four-way against Team Macktion, The Naptown Dragons and the team of Azrieal and Bandido Jr. but then lost to The Best Around in a tag title match. Thumbtack Jack beat Nick Gage in a Barbed Wire match but was then attacked by JC Bailey and Billy Gram, DJ Hyde beat Nate Hatred despite interference by Joe Gacy, Jon Dahmer beat Ryan McBride, Ryan Slater won a Scramble match,

The first CZW show in 2010 is set for January 30th at The Arena in Philadelphia. There'll be a double-header in February with the first show being free ,

Jimmy Jacobs



IN HIS BOOK, YOU WILL LEARN HOW DUSTY worked his way through the territories of wrestling during a time when Vince McMahon was taking his World Wrestling Federation to unforeseen heights. His years of working regularly for the WWF are covered and you'll learn how Dusty was given the task of helping Tiny Lister (Zeus) prepare for a main event run against Hulk Hogan in 1989.

Journal of a Journeyman - Available from www.rasslinriotonline.com - $19.99

Jersey All Pro Wrestling held 'Seasons Beatings' at the Rahway Rec. Center on November 21st.

Dan Maff is still JAPW World Heavyweight Champion after he saw off the challenge of Christopher Daniels, JAPW Tag Team Champions The Hillbilly Wrecking Crew defeated H8 Club, Archadia beat Rhett Titus to keep his NJ State title, Sara De Rey beat Sumie Sakai to retain her JAPW Women's title, The New Age Outlaws beat The South Side Playaz Club, Eddie Kingston and Bboy beat Azrieal and Light Heavyweight Champion Bandido Jr when Bboy pinned Bandido, Devon Moore beat The Grim Reefer and Corvis Fear went to a 10 minute draw with Sami Callihan.

Masato Tanaka will make his debut for the company on the 12th Anniversary show when he faces Homicide on January 23rd at the same venue. Dan Maff defends his JAPW World Heavyweight title against Eddie Kingston, Drake Younger puts his CZW World Heavyweight title on the line against Ruckus, Sara Del Rey defends the JAPW Women's title against Madison Rayne, Bandido Jr. defends his Light Heavyweight belt against Bboy, it's Archadia v Devon Moore for the NJ State title and The Hillbilly Wrecking Crew defend their tag titles against The H8 Club and Da Heavy Hitters. More info at www.japw.net

The 2009 Jeff Peterson Memorial Cup began on November 20th at the Brooksville National Guard Armory.

First round results saw Davey Richards beat Drake Younger, Egotistico Fantastico defeat Scotty Vortekz, TJ Perkins beat Arik Cannon, Shane Hollister got the win over Flip Kendrick, Silas Young eliminated Dave Cole, Jon Moxley beat Brad Attitude, Johnny Gargano beat Chris Jones and Louis Lyndon beat Marion Fontaine.

Night Two took place on November 21st at the Crystal River National Guard Armory. Second round results saw Davey Richards beat Egotistico Fantastico, TJ Perkins beat Shane Hollister, Johnny Gargano eliminated Louis Lyndon and Silas Young beat Jon Moxley. The semi-finals saw wins for Richards over Perkins and Young over Gargano with Richards defeating Young in the final to win the 2009 Jeff Peterson Memorial Cup.

The 'Hulkamania – Let the Battle Begin' tour of Australia took place last month with shows in Melbourne (21st), Perth (24th), Brisbane (26th) and Sydney (28th).

In results from Melbourne, Hulk Hogan beat Ric Flair in a bloody affair despite interference by Lacey Von Erich, Pimp Fatha (aka The Godfather) and Nick Dinsmore beat Rock of Love, 'Spartan 3000' Matt Cross beat Shannon Moore, The Nasty Boys defeated Vampire Warrior (Gangrel) and Black Pearl, Brutus 'The Barber' Beefcake got a win over John Heidenreich, Lacey Von Erich won a bikini challenge, Mr Ken Anderson beat Sean Morley and Junior Fatu (Rikishi) teamed up with Brian Christopher to beat Orlando Jordan and USO Fatu (Umaga).

In Perth, Hogan again beat Flair this time in a No DQ match that saw Jimmy Hart, Lacey Von Erich, USO Fatu, John Heidenreich, Orlando Jordan and The Nasty Boys get involved, Junior Fatu and Brian Christopher beat Rock of Love, Shannon Moore beat Matt Cross, Rosey beat Pimp Fatha and Sean Morley, John Heidenreich, Vampire Warrior and Black Pearl beat The Nasty Boys and Nick Dinsmore, Orlando Jordan beat Mr Ken Anderson, Lacey Von Erich won a bikini challenge and USO Fatu beat Brutus Beefcake.

In Brisbane Hogan of course beat Ric Flair, Junior Fatu and Brian Christopher beat Rock of Love, Shannon Moore drew with Matt Cross, Rosey beat Sean Morley and Pimp Fatha, John Heidenreich, Black Pearl and Vampire Warrior beat The Nasty Boys and Nick Dinsmore, the bikini contest was won by Kiara Dillon, Orlando Jordan beat Mr Ken Anderson and USO Fatu beat Brutus Beefcake.

The tour ended in Sydney on the 28th, Hogan of course beat Flair, Pimpfatha beat Sean Morley, The Nasty Boys and Rock of Love went to a double count-out but returned later for an Australian Street Fight won by The Nasty Boys, John Heidenreich beat Nick Dinsmore, Black Pearl and Vampire Warrior beat Junior Fatu and Brian Christopher. Brutus Beefcake beat OrlandoJordan, Matt Cross won a ladder match against Shannon Moore and Osu Fatu beat Mr. Ken Anderson in what sadly proved to be Fatu's last ever match.

PHOTOS WANTED

If you regularly attend and photograph these events please consider sending thumbnails to ed@thewrestlingpress.com for review and we may use them in future issues.

WOMEN'S WRESTLING NEWS

| By STEVE ASHFIELD (News Editor) |

WSU held their final show of the year on a joint show with held in Flemington on December 12th with over 250 people attending.

Mercedes Martinez is still WSU World Champion after pinning Awesome Kong. After the match the champion was attacked by Nikki Roxx and Amber O'Neal and ordered Kong to join them, but the TNA star wouldn't take orders from them and laid Roxx out. Angel Orsini and Jazz then came to the ring to deal with O'Neal and Roxx but they managed to make their escape.

The WSU Spirit title changed hands when Alicia beat Brittney Savage to win the belt. Her win makes Alicia the only woman to have ever won the WSU title, the Tag titles and the Spirit title. The match was due to be a tag bout featuring Jana and Latasha but after Jana attacked her former tag partner backstage and Commissioner Moore set up the Spirit title match instead. After the match Alicia was attacked by Jana before Jennifer Cruz made the save setting up a tag match for later on the show.

Former WWE Women's Champion, Jazz beat former WSU Champion Angel Orsini after Nikki Roxx attacked Orsini. Roxx had earlier beaten Cindy Rogers to maintain her push for another shot at the WSU title. It's since been revealed that Roxx is keen to recruit Jazz to join her and Rain. Amber O'Neal made it 5-0 in WSU with a win over Sumie Sakai. O'Neal then tried to set up a match with the ring announcer So Cal Val before Jazz made the save setting up a match between the pair at the Third Anniversary Show. Jennifer Cruz and Angelina Love beat Rick Cataldo and Jana.

Mercedes Martinez

© Christine Coons - www.studio11b.com

Jazz will be making more appearances for WSU during 2010 with plans to give her students a chance to appear for the company. Angelina Love will also be part of the WSU set-up next year.

The next show is the Third Anniversary Show set for March 6th at the ACE Arena in Union City. Matches already confirmed see Mercedes Martinez defend her WSU World Women's title against Rain in an Uncensored Rules match, Alicia puts her Spirit title on

the line against Brittney Savage and will get five minutes alone in the ring with Rick Cataldo if she wins her match, it's Angel Orsini v Nikki Roxx, Jana faces Latasha in a submission match and Jazz takes on Amber O'Neal Also due to appear are Jessicka Havok, Angelina Love, Jennifer Cruz, Destiny and Cindy Rogers with more to be confirmed.

There's also plans for a women's wrestling convention and a second Hall of Fame ceremony will also take place. Confirmed for the 2010 WSU Hall of Fame are Jazz and Molly Holly.The 2010 Women's J-Cup and the King/Queen tournaments will be held in conjunction with NWS on April 3rd and 4th. More info at www.wsuwrestling.com

Mercedes Martinez has topped the Pro Wrestling Illustrated rankings for the week ending December 18th.

Her rise to the top came after beating Awesome Kong in a defence of her WSU World Women's title on December 12th, the week before Martinez was ranked number ten. Last weeks number one, Mickie James drops to two and Melina is at number three,

WXW C-4 held the Empress of the Ring tournament in Allentown on December 5th.

The first round saw Mercedes Martinez beat Brittney Savage, Niya pinned Jana, Amy Lee beat Alicia and Annie Social got a win over Roxie Cotton. The semi-finals saw Commissioner Maven Bentley allow both Mercedes Martinez and Niya go through to the final after a time-limit draw and they were joined by Amy Lee who beat Annie Social. The final was a three-way elimination match with Martinez pinning Niya but it was Amy Lee who got the final pin to win the tournament. Also on the card Alicia teamed up with Samu and Afa Jr to beat The Daniels Dynasty.

JAPW held their latest women's division show on November 14th.

Cheerleader Melissa beat Hailey Hatred to earn herself a title shot later on the card, Sassy Stephie beat Fate, Annie Social beat Autumn Breeze after interference by The South Side Players Club which didn't impress Social who then issued an open challenge that was accepted by debutant Mia Yim. Social got the win to keep her in title contention. Allison Wonderland beat Brittany Force who challenged Wonderland to a rematch on the next show (no news if it's been accepted yet), Allison Danger got a win over Ariel on her JAPW WD debut and in the main event Sara Del Rey retained her JAPW Women's title with a DQ win over Cheerleader Melissa after interference by Hailey Hatred who caused the referee to get knocked out. Del Rey issued a challenge post match and it's Rey v Melissa v Hatred on January 9th in a NO DQ match. Del Rey will also face Sumie Sakai on the November 21st after Jonny D issued a challenge.'Seasons Beating' show with the title on the line. Del Rey won that match the following week to retain her title.

Rachel Moore beat Claudia Reiff and Melissa Coates in Ocala on November 21st to retain her BANG Women's title.

She defends her title again against Reiff, Coates, Charlotte Mahoy and Sah Ra in a steel cage gauntlet match on December 31st. MsChif is still the NWA World Women's Champion after recently beating Amy Hennig and Tasha Simone.

Roxie Cotton won the World-1 Women's tile beating Annie Social on November 22nd.

Misty James teamed up with her husband Beau James to beat Rebecca Lynn and Jamie Gibson in a Texas Tornado Bull Wire match held in SSW on November 28th.

ODB retained her Knockouts title at 'Turning Point' held on November 16th when she partnered tag champions Taylor Wilde and Sarita to victory over The Beautiful People.

On the same card Tara beat Awesome Kong in a Six Sides of Steel match.

Hamada was on a winning streak with victories over Alissa Flash and both of the tag champions but then lost a Global title match to Eric Young on December 11th. Tara won the TNA Knockouts title when she beat ODB at the 'Final Resolution' PPV held on December 20th.

Former WWE diva and current TNA knockout Christy Hemme has announced her in-ring retirement after suffering a neck injury earlier this year. She will though be staying in TNA and was used as a backstage interviewer on this weeks episode of Impact.

Katie Lea is battling hard to stay in ECW.

After her 'brother' Paul Burchill lost a Loser Leaves ECW match to The Hurricane she's now appearing under a mask as 'The Beautiful Nightmare' in an attempt to stay on the brand. However on the December 15th edition 'The Ripper' (Paul Burchill) again lost to The Hurricane so Paul and Katie are still without an ECW contract.

Hannah Blossom lost her OVW Women's title to Josie at 'Thanksgiving Thunder' on November 28th.

After a successful spell in the States Team Blossom have now returned to the UK but hope to return to America in the new year.

Jessicka Havok and Hailey Hatred will be seeking revenge on male tag team The Jack of Love at the AIW show at Peasbodys Down Under in Cleveland on December 20th.

'Sunny' will be the Special Guest GM for ISPW at their 'Seasons Beating' show due to take place on December 26th at the ISPW Arena in Freehold.

Pro Wrestling: EVE is a new all female wrestling company in the UK and will hold its first show next year.

It's being run by Dann Read who was previously the UK producer for ChickFight. More information in future issues and at www.EVEwrestling.com

RDW held their 5th Anniversary show at the Empress Ballrooms in Mexborough on November 21st.

On the afternoon show Babylove (Stacey Baybie and Chelsey Love) beat The Keepers of the Catch. The anniversary show itself saw a match for the RDW Women's title, the team of Britani Knight and Sweet Saraya beat Babylove in an elimination tag match, Knight eliminated Stacey Baybie and Chelsey Love eliminated Sweet Saraya and it was Knight who pinned Love to win the title. The next show is again at the Empress Ballrooms in Mexborough on February 6th. The first match confirmed sees Ricky Knight and Sweet Saraya take on Martin Kirby and Stayce Baybie. Those confirmed to appear include Britani Knight and Chelsey Love,

Britani Knight added the RQW Women's title to her HEW title when she beat Jetta on December 19th.

Also on the card Sam Knee beat Sweet Saraya meaning Saraya has to leave the company.

On November 20th Chrissy V and Jetta have qualified for the UKW Women's title tournament due to take place next year.

Chrissy beat Faith Lehaine after conning the referee into believing her opponent had hit her with a chair leading to Lehaine being disqualified. Jetta, who interfered in the Chrissy and Lehanine match later beat The Swedish Tigress to book her place in the tournament.

Futureshock held a charity event at the Swinton Masonic Hall on December 6th with Melanie Price teaming up with April Davids to beat The Swedish Tigress and Pippa L'Vinn.

Roselyn won the WAR title when she won a gauntlet match against male opposition in Rugby on December 5th.

WORKING THE SMARTS

| By DUSTY WOLFE - dwolfe414@msn.com |

Dusty is a 20+ year veteran of the squared circle, six of those years being with the WWF and the remainder with promotions from all over the world!

I'm sitting here writing this column, and thinking to myself. Self...if the powers that be at TNA could generate PPV buys and ticket sales like they generate internet media attention, TNA would put everyone else out of business. I understand Vince Russo is only interested in working the smarts on the net. I understand TNA is making a profit somewhere. Or so I'm told. BUT...isn't the idea of wrestling creating ticket sales and PPV buys?

I bring this up because of the two big events this past month in TNA. And don't believe for a second these two happenings aren't related. Dixie Carter's meeting with TNA talent, and the signing of Hulk Hogan.

I have heard all the arguments, pro and con, against signing Hogan. And the bottom line of that whole debate is this. Even at his age, even physically a shell of his former self, Hulk Hogan is one of only three names the average person on the street will associate with pro wrestling. Seeing that Dwayne Johnson seems to be doing well today, and Steve Austin isn't looking for bookings, Hogan is the man to go to for some recognition. How Hogan is booked, how often, and all those other details will determine just how smart a move this one really is.

TNA has done nothing to break new talent out in such a way that actually gets that young talent over. And I don't mean with the internet smarts, I mean with the ticket buying public. I honestly don't see much changing in that respect, but who knows? TNA has made a commitment that COULD pay off. Will it? TNA actually stands a chance of making a bit of money here, IF Hogan and others that follow, are willing to give the younger guys Russo can't get over "the rub". Or pass the torch, if you will.

I mentioned earlier how this ties in somehow with Dixie Carter's talent meeting. I'm not in the booking meetings, but, this one smells a lot like the "evil" Dixie Carter taking control of her company. Exactly where Hogan fits, I don't know. Dixie Carter wants to meet with her talent and get some facts across, while hopefully setting some attitudes straight, great. Why film this meeting for public consumption on TV, costing the company more money? And why cut and retake her speech 2 or 3 times to get the proper "feel"? WHY? Because this meeting was the beginning of an angle. Simple enough. Hell, it worked once before.....

As I mentioned earlier TNA does a great job of stirring up interest on the internet. Will any of the recent action stir up interest to the tune of money flowing their direction? Only time will tell. The entire dynamic of the backstage situation should be fun to follow the next few months, even if TNA doesn't make a dime for themselves.

On a side note...Desmond Wolfe is the most popular name in England? What search engine did that come from. I highly recommend the last name, but Desmond?

Dusty's title history

- South American Heavyweight title;
- South African Heavyweight title;
- United States Tag Team titles w/Tim Horner;
- Mid South Heavyweight title (indy version);
- PWI (San Antonio) United States Heavyweight title;
- WCCW Heavyweight title (90's Arkansas version);
- WWC World Tag Team titles w/Mohammed Hussein;
- WWC Carribbean Tag Team titles w/Galan Mendoza;
- NWA-SW Television title;
- CWF (New Orleans) Heavyweight title;
- IWF (South Texas/Mexico) Heavyweight title;
- FWF (Belgium) Tag Team titles w/Rob Raw defeating Gabriel Angelfire & Dr. Gangreen.

Info from www.obsessedwith-wrestling.com

Gabe Sapolsky has been named as the Booker of the Year in Year End Awards. A founder of Ring of Honor and FIP, the man behind Dragon Gate and EVOLVE, Gabe Sapolsky has a wrestling mind far beyond mortal men! From his early days in ECW to his current endeavours, Gabe Sapolsky is a man who is always developing and, to coin a term 'EVOLVing' his skils. The Wrestling Press was privileged to be able to sit down with the best booker in wrestling to discuss his career and future plans.

GABE SAPOLSKY

By PHIL AUSTIN - PhilUK1@aol.com

Q The first obvious question to ask anyone was how did you get involved in the wrestling business? Presumably you were a fan beforehand, but how did you make that transition from fan to participant, and did you feel immediately 'accepted' into the fold?

A I was lucky and got in at the right time. It was before the internet, so I wrote Tod Gordon an actual letter saying I was going to Temple University and I wanted to help out. He answered and the rest is history. If I tried now, mine would probably be one of a hundred emails that comes in all the time. I felt accepted almost immediately as there weren't many people like me running around helping out and they needed the help.

Q Growing up and watching wrestling, which were the guys and the promotions you really enjoyed watching, and how do you feel your enjoyment of them impacted on your booking and appreciation of talent later on?

A NWA in the 80s was my favourite, of course World Class too and when I got into tape trading I loved the New Japan juniors and All Japan main events. You can see fingerprints of all that stuff on my booking.

Q Moving into your time at ECW, what was Paul Heyman like to work with? There have been many stories that he liked to have full control and try and do everything himself. Was this the case?

A Yes, he was very hands on and liked to be involved with everything. He figured if "I want something done right, I'll just do it myself." He was incredible to work under. I learned so much from him about wrestling and life, and I still do to this day. He is very unselfish in teaching. It wouldn't be enough for him to teach me to do something, he wanted me to learn the theories and reasons behind it too. I couldn't have asked for a better boss and mentor.

Q The ringside area of the ECW arena was a pretty wild place to be. As someone who experienced that firsthand, were there ever times you genuinely were worried for your health standing 'in the line of fire'?

A Oh yeah, of course. The scariest guy was actually Bobby Duncam Jr as he had a bull whip and you had to get out of the way of it during ring entrances. Having that thing snap right by you was definitely a scary experience. One funny story is that the Revere building had a really small ringside area and one time I found myself stuck in

between Bubba Dudley and a bunch of stuff flying around. I ran towards Bubba's side, thinking he would just let me by, but he didn't budge and I almost got squashed. Afterwards in the locker room, me being pretty ignorant in my youth, went up to Bubba and told him he should move in those situations. Bubba looked at me for a second like he was going to kill me, then calmed himself and said "you should never tell a wrestler that he has to move, it is your job to move around us, and if I didn't like you I'd smack you right now." Looking back I see I was totally in the wrong to tell that to Bubba and I learned my lesson. After all, Bubba is the one performing and no one is watching the cameraman!

Q Who were the guys who you really bonded with in the ECW locker room if any and are there any great locker room stories that you have to tell (and that can legally be told!) from that time?

A JT Smith from the early days of ECW and I still consider him a friend to this day. JT is such a great guy, he totally took care of me when I was just starting out and if it wasn't for him I'm not sure I would have lasted. I learned so much from him, too. He is such an unheralded guy in the history of ECW. I have a lot of locker room stories, but I'll save those for another time or my blog at www.Myspace.com/rohgabe.

Q What were the moments in ECW that you thought 'ok, that was just tremendous' (or expletive filled versions of that phrase)? And any real cringeworthy moments, both personally or in the ring?

A That is a really loaded question, because there are just so many good moments. I mean it was so amazing being even a small part of it and seeing so many things accomplished and watching the company grow. The main cringeworthy moments was when someone got hurt. I still remember vividly thinking Stevie Richards was paralyzed after a match in Buffalo after he got hit on the back by a guardrail. That stuff was really bad and I guess you can say almost all of my bad moments come from moments like that.

Q Obviously it was a pretty sad day for wrestling fans when ECW closed up in 2001. At the time was 'the writing on the wall' obvious? Different wrestlers have either said they knew it was coming or that they were shocked when it happened. What is your take on the situation?

A I think most of us saw it coming, but it didn't make things less painful or sad when it happened.

Q Talk us through the moment you sat down with Rob Feinstein and talked about running your own wrestling shows. Was there ever a moment of doubt at that stage that you could do it and make money, or was it something you knew you just had to do?

A We saw a great opportunity with the talent available. I think what really opened up our eyes was RF Video taped a CZW show with Jun Kasai, and it sold a lot of copies, I mean a lot of copies, and then it became obvious there would be a market. Rob actually wanted to have a promotion for a lot longer than I did and probably would have gone ahead and done it without me, but then one day I came around, but I think Rob would have done it anyway. Would it have been Ring Of Honor? I don't know, but it would have happened with or without me.

Q The first Ring of Honor shows introduced a bunch of new concepts, such as the handshake, clean finishes and the code of honor itself. What was the thinking behind these concepts, and did you think the fans would take to them straight away, or that they would take time to 'get'?

A I think they were simple enough for the fans to get right away. At the time everyone was trying to be the next ECW and have their promotion like that. However, it all just came off as cheap imitations of ECW. We wanted something that immediately said we were going in another direction and were starting something new and fresh. All those concepts sent that message.

Q RF Video had access to numerous tapes from Japan, independents in the US and overseas, and footage from the vast history of pro wrestling. Which, if any, tapes in particular influenced your shaping of the Ring of Honor product?

A The King Of Indies tournament, that was a real eye opener as to what kind of talent was available and what they were capable of, Jim Kettner's ECWA had some glimpses of it too. Then of course just the stuff that influenced me growing up.

Q Some of those early shows also introduced wrestlers largely unfamiliar to the audience at the time, but who would become stars in their own right. I'm thinking of men like Bryan Danielson, Spanky, Low Ki, Christopher Daniels, Doug Williams, even the girls such as Alexis Laree. Did you ever imagine that Ring of Honor would feature so many of these future stars?

A Yes, their talent was clear, and it's a shame it took the bigger companies so long to realise it. I always said that these guys were the new wave of what Eddy Guerrero, Chris Benoit, Dean Malenko, Chris Jericho, etc... were in the 90s.

Q One of the big stars of the time, Eddy Guerrero, appeared on those early shows. What was Guerrero like to work with, and how did it come about that you got to use him on Ring of Honor?

A We needed a name to draw the fans in, he was available so it was only natural. He was fantastic to work with! In fact, he insisted on coming back for our 3rd show even after he resigned with WWE. I still regret not doing him vs Christopher Daniels on that show.

Q As Ring of Honor grew, so did the talent. One of the major acquisitions of Ring of Honor was Samoa Joe, who obviously made a huge impact (no pun intended). What are your memories of Joe's time as champion, and how important was it to Ring of Honor?

A Joe's reign was extremely important. He understood what it meant to be champ and the top guy. He knew how to carry the company. He is the Babe Ruth of ROH to me. He was the right guy to make the ROH title important and he knew how to do it.

Q Speaking of important times in Ring of Honor, what moment or moments would you point to as the pivotal moments in Ring of Honor's history?

A There are just so many, it is hard to narrow it down.

Q In the same vein, what angles or programmes are you most proud of that you were involved in?

A Looking back I would say that Cage Of Death and the CZW feud was the pinnacle of my time in ROH. I think everything leading up to it saw the company on a slow incline, we just kept going up and up from Generation Next to the Summer Of Punk. Then we hit a pinnacle with Cage Of Death and during my time we were never able to reach that height again, even if we drew bigger crowds for some shows.

Q Who do you feel were the most underrated guys (or girls) that Ring of Honor had on their roster?

A It's hard for me to say someone is underrated because if I was booking them, I didn't think they were underrated.

Q What were your feelings when Rob Feinstein left Ring of Honor in the manner that it happened?

A I'm really not going to talk about that. It was not a good time and I don't want to revisit it.

Q What was your experience like touring the UK and Japan (and indeed Canada) with ROH? Was there ever a moment when you could have dreamed touring internationally?

A It was amazing. When we started ROH we never dreamed that we would reach such international success, to the point of having

international shows in England and Japan. I mean, we went to all sides of the world. It was great to be able to travel and experience different places, just amazing.

Q At the end of 2008, you and Ring of Honor parted ways. Can you take us through how that came about from your standpoint, and what the weeks following that were like? Did you get a lot of support from the roster?

A I really have talked about this a lot. It was very difficult, but I did receive a lot of support. I prefer not to dwell on the negative now. I really talk about this a lot in my blog at www.Myspace.com/rohgabe so I'm not going to repeat a lot of it now. I've moved on.

Q What was the importance of Full Impact Pro to you? It seemed to many to be a side project you took on, but grew into something that you had every bit as much passion for as Ring of Honor.

A FIP was a lot of fun and I feel we did some great stuff there. Bryan Danielson's title reign there will always be a highlight. Having stuff like the CM Punk vs. Homicide brawls that went into strip clubs, had mechanical bulls, went into hurricanes, was all great stuff. Seeing Roderick Strong and Erick Stevens have such pride in their matches and FIP since it was their home Florida promotion. Having an old school feud with some hardcore stuff like Heartbreak Express vs. Black Market and seeing it actually draw money and sell tickets, was great and something that wouldn't have happened in ROH. I can go on and on. FIP was more about fun than ROH and for that reason it was important. You'll see that a lot of stuff that happened in ROH, happened first in some form in FIP, even things like booking talent first like Tyler Black. I am proud all the way up to my final shows there with Go Shiozaki winning the title and the reaction of the fans. It is all really underrated stuff.

Q One more thing I must ask before we move on from Ring of Honor. What was going through your mind when you heard the reaction to Jeff Hardy walking out into a Ring of Honor ring? And why do you think Matt Hardy in the same ring got such a different reaction?

A We all figured Jeff would get that reaction. It was just that time and place. We all figured Matt would get such a positive reaction, especially after putting ROH over on Raw. Both things were great in their own way and hold a special place in ROH history.

Q When you left Ring of Honor, there was immediate speculation that WWE or TNA may snap you up. Were you approached by either of these with opportunities? If so, did you just turn them down straight away, and if you were not approached, why do you think they didn't go all out to get the man voted best booker so many years in a row?

A No, I wasn't approached. I don't know why. You'll have to ask them. They seem to want Hollywood writers and that I am not.

Q Fantasy time now. If you had gone to WWE and TNA, and you were handed complete creative control to change each company's style, what would be the first things you would change in each?

A Well, it is hard to answer that quickly here without going into a lot of detail with stuff. The first thing with TNA would be rebuilding the X division. WWE doesn't need any radical changes. They are overproducing wrestling for the masses and that's what works for them. They are in a different universe than everyone else. The main thing there would be just giving the wrestlers more creative freedom and giving them more of a chance to define themselves and not have to read scripted, forced lines. At least that is the way I was taught to book.

Q Now to the important stuff. What you are doing right now. You are currently involved with the best top to bottom PPV promotion in the country, if not around the world, in Dragon Gate USA. Obviously you'd worked with Dragon Gate in Japan before. Was it your decision to get involved with DGUSA, and how did that come about?

A They had approached me about running a show in the United States last January, in fact it was for Wrestlemania weekend last year. The timing obviously wouldn't have worked out, since it was only a few months away. I was still dealing with moving on from ROH and getting back on my feet and fixing my personal life so I wasn't ready to dive into something yet. We sat on the idea for a month and then figured we could expand the idea into six shows per year and put them right on PPV. We put together a proposal for Dragon Gate. They are a very aggressive, forward thinking company and were receptive to it and everything just came together.

Q How does your booking of DGUSA vary from your booking of an ROH or FIP show?

A There is one major difference. Since DGUSA is only 6 shows or so a year we can just go balls to the wall on each show. We can concentrate on being the "premium" product and always keeping that quality at a high level. FIP was more about fun and for the Florida crowd and the DVD buying audience. ROH was just overkill at 40 shows a year and I told that to Cary many times. It was too much for the fans to follow and too many shows to make every single one special, which is how they had to be for DVD sales. So with ROH we would have to stretch things out, do lots of rematches, keep angles going and just keep squeezing the most we could out of everything. With so few DGUSA shows we can just go all out on every card and do blowaway lineup after blowaway lineup. We don't have to worry about what we are going to do for the other 7 shows in a 2 month period. We are talking about 1 show in a 2 months period with DGUSA. Also, we are concentrating on just the highest quality six matches possible with DGUSA. I believe in shorter shows, but keeping everything on a main event or semi-main event level so there isn't any filler. You need the extra matches in ROH to develop new talent and establish new talent since there were so many shows. With DGUSA we have the Dragon Gate roster and then cherry pick established names from elsewhere so we can just have six incredible matches per show, and I feel at six matches we don't burnout the crowd. So there are actually a lot of differences between booking the three promotions.

Q You've had some of the best matches in many years on the shows thus far. What have been some of the real highlights of the shows so far for you. The matches that fans should move heaven and earth to see. Or at the very least to buy the DVD to see!

Davey Richards © Julie Ahn

A I loved Davey Richards vs. Shingo on the "Open The Untouchable Gate" DVD from Chicago. To me it is right up there with Bryan Danielson vs. KENTA from "Glory By Honor" at the Manhattan Center. The funny thing is a lot of people seemed to prefer Bryan Danielson vs. Naruki Doi from Chicago so I guess it is a matter of taste. I loved the entire "Open The Historic Gate" DVD and while I won't say there are any match of the years on it, from top to bottom I think it is the most perfect show I've ever been fortunate enough to be a part of. I think the fans will really enjoy both DVDs, as we put a lot of love and care into them with deluxe packaging, bonus features and matches and we put these out as double DVD sets to insure the highest picture quality. We are really proud of these releases.

Q From a talent perspective who have been the real shining stars in DGUSA thus far, and who is bubbling under that you think will rise to the surface very soon?

A I really think everyone has, but I'll specifically mention The Young Bucks. They were put high on the card on the first show, because we wanted to

establish them as building blocks in DGUSA. They not only responded by having the show stealing match, but they hit a home run in the post match angle and promo, giving them an identity. The Dragon Gate guys are just absolutely amazing and you can never go wrong with that talent roster. CIMA, Shingo, Naruki Doi, Dragon Kid, Masato Yoshino, BxB Hulk, YAMATO, those are all franchise guys and the list goes on with Horiguchi, Saito, Mochizuki, Yokosuka, all of whom we haven't properly utilized in DGUSA yet. Then of course we have Davey Richards, who is the top American independent talent now in my opinion. We'll have fresh matches and angles forever with so few shows and so much great talent.

Q For those poor souls who have yet to witness a DGUSA show, describe what they are in for, and what makes it different from other wrestling shows.

A I don't have to sell these guys. We claim to be the "premium" product for a reason. Our DVDs ship anywhere in the world and play anywhere in the world. We take great pride in them and feel they are worth your support. You can go to www.DGUSA.tv for more info. This is a product that won't break your bank. We are asking you to buy six or so DVDs a year. You can see all the great matches, characters, storyline developments, angles, really sink your teeth into it for under $150 a year. Most importantly, I feel that you will watch our DVDs over and over again. You will get the most value for your dollar with DGUSA.

Q Tell us a bit about EVOLVE. It's got some interesting new concepts for a promotion I understand.

A Basically, there is a lot of great talent that we aren't able to utilize in DGUSA because there are so few shows and the focus is on the Dragon Gate roster, DGUSA is an all star roster. There is a lot of talent out there that reminds me of where the Briscoes, Alex Shelley, Chris Sabin, Jimmy Jacobs, Jack Evans, Roderick Strong, Austin Aries, Nigel McGuinness and so many others were right before they entered ROH. Now this new talent needs a stage so they can rise and grow and we will give them that stage in EVOLVE. We are taking a different approach with things. Instead of telling you about them go to www.EVOLVEwrestling.com and explore it and find out about us.

Q How did you determine the roster for EVOLVE? There's quite a few names not familiar to the majority of fans on your roster page (in much the same way as Ring of Honor when it started). Who do you feel we should be particularly looking out for on EVOLVE shows as 'breakout stars'?

A Once again, we were looking for hungry talent with drive and work ethic. I was amazed at how many people there are with these qualities and I think they will all rise to the occasion and shine on this stage. I don't want to get into particular names because that might give away too much as to what will happen, but we have a very interesting roster section up at EVOLVEwrestling.com so I hope everyone will check it out.

Q Can you fill us in on your involvement with the FWA in the UK at the moment. How did it come about, and what is your role with them?

A Right now it's on the backburner a little, but I'm still firmly committed to FWA and making things grow. It has just been kind of difficult to be hands on with me being so far away and having so much going on in my life right now. However, I think FWA is doing a lot of great things and I look forward to being involved in the future and doing whatever I can to help this company grow. I think there is a ton of potential there and they are making a lot of great strides.

Q Many thanks for agreeing to this interview. I would like to wish you every success in the future of DGUSA and EVOLVE. Finally, do you have anything you'd like to say to those fans reading this?

A Thank you very much for your support. We will continue to work out hardest to bring you something new and exciting. I wake up everyday very excited about the future with both DGUSA and EVOLVE and I hope everyone will give both companies a chance. All we ask if that you give us a shot and we will deliver.

A Learning Curve As Steep As Kilimanjaro

By THE CYNIC - hearditallbefore@hotmail.com

In my world, you wouldn't put an MP elected on the Monday in the foreign office on the Wednesday and then make him or her Foreign Secretary on the Friday. They need to earn their spurs, face the troubles of office and experience the dangers and pain of the media. The stresses, strains and top level decisons of high office would be too onorous a task and the country would look ridiculous on the world stage.

Likewise, you wouldn't ask a pilot who has been learning for two weeks and had a go on the flight simulator to fly the plane to Hong Kong.

Or ask a bloke with little wrestling knowledge to take part in a live wrestling programme as onscreen GM, that would be ridiculous. Ermmm..

Ay, there's the rub (you can also get one at Roxxxy's Gentleman's Health Club, of course) because the WWE does elevate it's school leavers, apprentices and work experience bods to star status with eye watering speed. It seems that no sooner have wrestlers made a splash in the everglades they're shipped off to Stamford and given their own share of the limelight. With no real help; just expected to thrive.

The WWE perhaps has no need to cosset. It's a corporation. Corporations exist to make money. They need to keep consuming or there's no point to them. And so the thing that brought them to the table, the wrestling, takes second place to the brand. They just need to keep it going to turn money over. You know, what I've been telling you pork-bellied popcorn munchers for months - real life economics, not just which tug DVD you can buy and which Chris Farley movie has more yuks per hour. The WWE is about turnover and profit.

And so, mud is thrown onto all four walls. And if it doesn't stick, it's sluiced away with the other detritus. The newbies from development (or Europe) are the grappling equivalent of cannon fodder. They are sent to the front in waves, with plenty of men and women to replace them.

There is no long term strategy in the WWE. But you wouldn't expect that, because (how many more times?) it's a corporation.. In the early years, wrestlers and angles were given the chance to unfold slowly, events were planned well in advance, careers were built. This is R&D - research and development. Whilst the Fed was developing, it had to get big slowly, it had to establish itself on the airwaves. And the best way to do that? Give us names we recognise. Slowly was the word. Wrestlers built their careers in there - Macho, Rude, Bret and Owen to name a few.

Because there was a competitor to worry about - not much of one, true, but WCW was a consideration, with it's own wrestling-friendly fanbase. And when Ted Turner, with his apparent "guess what, I'm in the rassling business!" call got involved, then upstart Bischoff roared in with a big budget and some zeitgeisty already-tried ideas and started to win, dammit, things got serious.

Vince needed a quick fix. He needed stars. He needed a new idea. And he got it. The Attitude era re-established the Fed and eventually destroyed the competition, winning in the way every corporation wants to - by destroying then swallowing the opposition. Once he'd won, the battlelines were redrawn though. Old rules became defunct.

Corporations are like sharks, they have to keep consuming, making profit, or else they die. But when there are no competitors left, no new markets, no fresh products, corporations struggle. The WWE has repositioned itself as a brand - this means nothing. To mainstream America they're still a rassling outfit, no matter how many movies they make. Consequently, they are stuck in the law of diminishing returns. Their profits are standing still/falling no matter how much they produce. The WWE is running to stand still.

A corporation finds new ways to make cash or it consumes from within. No matter how obscene I think shedding staff when still making profits is (and I happen to think it's more obscene than Granny Enid's Copraphilia Roadshow), the blizzard of recent pink slips is wholly understandable for a corporation - no fresh meat means the corp continues to consume - itself. Those people wished well in their endeavours are often in the name of efficiency savings. Savings in a profitable company. Definition of obscene.

And one other thing corporations forgo in lean/successful times is development. Development of wrestlers. They need a quick fix, a constant influx of meat to fill their burgeoning programming; there's only one way to do that, either by buying big stars from elsewhere (and where is that elesewhere? ROH?) or bringing them on from the bottom up.

But they don't. They bring them from the bottom to the top with the unseemly haste and lack of experience of an "X Factor" finalist - Rhydian, Shane Ward, Steve Brookstein, where art thou? - and then dump them when they're not another Rock or Austin. The latest are white as a ghost Sheamus and racial stereotype Jamaican Kofi Kingston, but in a month, come back and you might not see them in the same light or position. After all, it seems that next big things Swagger and Morrison have disappointed and been demoted. Bang goes their WWE chance.

And why did they fail? Why will SOS and Kofi fail? Firstly, they don't have charisma; Swagger played the cocky heel but could only do the surface stuff - lookalike Nowinski did it better - whereas Morrison was a six pack, a smile, some smooth moves and that was it. In the past they would have been nurtured, put in angles to show them at their best and gradually wormed into our hearts. Now they have a very narrow window of opportunity.

And that's also because angles aren't allowed to develop; TV writers are good to sucker in audiences. They're not so good at keeping them. Put new stars in a feud, call them the next big thing and leave them to it; no, we have to see that the Fed rates them and wants them to succeed, then we'll give 'em a chance. By simply letting them sink or swim, the crowd feels that the brass are saying "yeah, they're not great, but if you don't like 'em, we'll just give you another couple."

So you have to be sure of your character, be allowed to portray that character and be lucky that management need you - CM Punk had that, Cabana didn't. And so Sheamus and Kofi will probably have disappeared within a couple of months - all one can do is snarl, all the other can do is grin inanely. It's the new way of things - short termism through fear and smaller profits through short-termism. Vince will eat himself.

Are you reading this, Mr Danielson? Look at your buddy Nigel in TNA. Happy with your choice?

The Cynic

WHO IS THE CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS?

| By PHIL AUSTIN - PhilUK1@aol.com |

There are just too many titles to keep track of these days. The WWE has two world champions (three if you count ECW), a US title, an Intercontinental title, two women's titles and unified tag champions. TNA has a world, tag and X division title, womens tag and singles titles and another created belt that is yet to really settle on a name it would seem.

The problem we have at the moment is that the proliferation of titles dilutes the importance of them. Do we really care if Miz is US champion, John Cena regained the WWE (or is that the World) title, and John Morrison beat Dolph Ziggler for the 75th time to retain his Intercontinental belt? And do we even know who half the champions are anyway?

I thought for this issue, it would be a nice idea to look through the history of several of the major titles, both past and present, and see who the most important titleholder in that belt's history was...not the best titleholder, but the man (or woman) whose omission from the title history would be, above and beyond all others, a glaring one. Let's begin with the big one....

The WWE Title

This is one of the titles with the richest history, especially when you take both the WWE and World title histories into account. But for all of the past champions, be they technical masters like Kurt Angle and Chris Benoit, or heavyweight contenders like Ultimate Warrior or Yokozuna, there are really no more than a handful of champions who deserve to be listed as the most important.

Bruno Sammartino was a popular champion in the 1960s and 1970s who held the title with pride and great drawing power throughout almost an entire decade.

At the other end of the spectrum, Steve Austin and the Rock were both hugely popular champions who helped to turn the fortunes of the WWF around during the turbulent Monday Night Wars. In fact, Austin in particular was instrumental in that upturn, as his feud over the title with WWF owner Vincent Kennedy (..dramatic pause...KENNEDY!) McMahon was the NWO beating storyline to end all storylines.

Yet there is one man above all others who redefined the WWF/E title and brought it to a whole new prominence. **Hulk Hogan** may not have been the best champion ever, but his drawing power pulled the WWF almost singlehandedly into an era of popularity unlike any that wrestling had ever known before. It wasn't solely Hogan's doing of course, but without the charismatic Hulkster on top, the WWE may never have been quite the juggernaut that it became. And for that reason, you have to give the nod to the Hulkster as the most important World champion in WWF/E history.

WCW/NWA title

Due to the confusing history of the NWA championship, we will consider the lineage of the WCW and NWA titles together, and discuss the TNA lineage of the title as part of the TNA title history.

There are some incredibly influential names in the NWA/WCW title history. Lou Thesz was arguably one of the greatest of all time. Buddy Rogers title reign redefined the history of the business due to the controversies that gave birth to the WWWF title. The Funks and Jack Brisco all gave the title added prestige in the 1970s. Harley Race was without a doubt one of the most respected champions in history. Dusty Rhodes and Sting were incredibly popular champions.

But there is one man whose name has become synonymous with the WCW and NWA titles, to the point where he, above all others, represents the championship. If you see a picture of the WCW or NWA belts, chances are it'll be around the waist of the Nature Boy, **Ric Flair**. The man who held the belt more times than anyone else also made the belt more of a focal point than anyone else. Whether committing dastardly tactics with his Horsemen cohorts in order to keep the belt, or competing as a face against the likes of Nikita and Ivan Koloff, Flair was always a champion that was a good representation of the company. When WCW bowed out in 2001, they couldn't have had a better final image than Ric Flair standing in the centre of the ring.

ECW title

This is a tricky one. The ECW title really hasn't had one dominant titleholder that is synonymous with the belt. In essence, your perception of who the most important champion was depends on which era you hold dear.

Towards the end of Heyman's ECW, champions such as Steve Corino, Jerry Lynn and Justin Credible held the belt and represented a new breed of wrestler coming through. In the WWE's ECW era, the belt has been passed through the likes of CM Punk, Tommy Dreamer, Christian, Matt Hardy and Mark Henry.

But to most ECW fans, the era of extreme was really represented by the years 1995 and 1996. These were the years that gave us Guerrero/Malenko classics, Tommy Dreamer's near-suicidal attempts to win the title, and three dominant champions.

One was a former WCW and WWF star who had undergone a stunning transformation to become the angst-ridden Raven. One was the bitter and outspoken 'Franchise' Shane Douglas. And the third was the epitome of what ECW was all about, the beer-drinking, cigarette-smoking Sandman.

But there was one further champion who brought the land of the extreme to the masses. No, not the

underdog champ Mikey Whipwreck. Not the homicidal, suicidal Sabu. I'm talking about **Terry Funk**. Funk was not the most dominant, or longest-reigning champion, but his title win at Barely Legal is so etched in the annals of ECW history that without it, the ECW legend would be far less than it is.

IF IT WASN'T FOR THE CAR ACCIDENT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN A MAJOR STAR

There are arguments for Douglas who helped create the revolution with his promos and in-ring actions; for Raven, whose wars with Dreamer were incredibly popular; for Sandman, who was the embodiment of ECW. There are even feasible arguments for Taz, whose win over a WCW star as a member of the WWF roster for the ECW title really shocked the wrestling world, or for Sabu, who was unlike any other wrestler the world had seen at that point. But for the pure moment of ending ECW's first PPV on such a majorly high and historic moment, Terry Funk gets the nod.

US title

If there is ever a DVD on the history of the US title (and I for one certainly hope this set is made), then there will be an amazing array of great moments on it. Flair and Steamboat battling for the belt in the 1970s. The legendary Piper/Valentine dog collar match. Magnum TA, Sting, Lex Luger, and Dusty Rhodes battling for the belt against vicious oppostiion.

But the actual most important competitor in US title history will always be a very difficult one to determine. I have narrowed it down, controversially, to two men.

Magnum TA. An incredibly popular champion, Magnum was being groomed as a major future world champion. And, if it wasn't for the unfortunate car accident he had, then he would probably have been a major star. Which makes his US title reign a potentially very important one.

Rick Rude. The Ravishing One's title reigns had more drama and action than almost anyone else's. His membership of the Dangerous Alliance, and feuds agains the likes of Sting, Dustin Rhodes and Barry Windham made for some of the most gripping WCW programming of the 1990s.

It's a difficult pick, but purely for the fact that Rude's US title reign coincided with a hot period for WCW, and his performances were consistently some of the best and most entertaining on the programming of the time, I will pick Rude as the most important of all the US champions.

IC title

Now here's a controversial category. With so many majorly different eras in the title's history, and so many influential stars holding the belt, who could possibly be deemed more important than any other?

First of all, we will eliminate all post 2001 title reigns. As great as many of these were, the title became so diluted that these reigns just couldn't compete with the all-time 'great' reigns.

So with that said, here are our list of real potential most important IC champions:

Honky Tonk Man – greatest intercontinental champion of all-time? Possibly the longest-reigning, but not the most important.

Pat Patterson – being the first makes him important, but he's been eclipsed.

Tito Santana – certainly an important champion of his era, but how memorable are his reigns now?

Ricky Steamboat and Randy Savage – people remember their tremendous match at Wrestlemania III for the belt, but does that make them the most important?

For me, it comes down to just two men. Mr Perfect and **Bret Hart**. The two men who helped define the belt as 'the wrestling belt' were both some of the best wrestlers of their era, and their battles over the belt almost drew as much attention as the World title fights. And that is a testament to how influential both these men were. Bret Hart would tip the scales by going straight onto a World title reign after a record setting IC title match against Davey Boy Smith at Wembley Stadium.

For being the best there was, and a part of some of the best of all the IC title matches, Bret Hart gets the nod.

ROH title

One of the newer titles, and a title that represents 'independent' wrestling, the Ring of Honor title has become a major belt in the minds of many. Nigel Mcguinness, CM Punk, Bryan Danielson and Takeshi Morishima have all had a major influence on shaping the future of the title during their reigns.

But one man has epitomised what 'taking the ball and running with it' meant for Ring of Honor. **Samoa Joe** went from being 'some guy who got the belt' to being a star that elevated Ring of Honor as he elevated himself. Joe's star has since risen, but his influence on the Ring of Honor title remains.

WWE tag titles

It would be wrong to ignore tag championships, so I thought we'd look at the history of the Unified tag championships. Certainly there were influential tag teams elsewhere, with the likes of the Midnight Express, Steiners and Road Warriors making a major impact on the world of tag team wrestling in the NWA and AWA.

But as far as WWF tag champions go, the buck stops with two teams. The British Bulldogs and the Hart Foundation. Both of these teams managed an influence that reached far beyond any of the other teams of their, or any other era.

Both were technically proficient, both were the perfect combination of power and skill, and both would be a major influence on all future stars.

But one team would go worldwide and become an influence all over the world. **The British Bulldogs** would be a team that almost every tag team competitor since would look back on and say "I want to be like them". A tag team that redefined tag team wrestling, a tag team that made tag team wrestling every bit as cool as singles wrestling, and a tag team that was above and beyond any other team since. The British Bulldogs: arguably the most influential WWF tag champions of all time.

TNA title

Not one of the longest running companies, but a company whose Heavyweight title has had a huge variety of holders. From the likes of Sting and Kurt Angle,

to newcomers such as AJ Styles and Samoa Joe, the title has gone through phase after phase of reinvention.

But the most influential champion has not been the most influential or groundbreaking in-ring performer, but the champion who had more 'stroke' in the company. **Jeff Jarrett** is the man who built the company and who the company often revolved around. As much as he is no Ric Flair or Hulk Hogan, he was TNA's Ric Flair or Hulk Hogan. Of course, now Hulk Hogan is TNA's Hulk Hogan. And maybe, just maybe, that will be an even bigger influence on TNA's future.

X Division championship

As much as Jerry Lynn was one of the pioneers, when you think of the X Division title, it comes down to just three men. AJ Styles, Christopher Daniels, and Samoa Joe. All have been an incredible influence on shaping the division, and all have had some of the most impressive matches in recent years.

Each could have a legitimate case for being named the most influential champion, but **AJ Styles** will get the nod. It was Styles who first stepped up and made the division in his image. It was Styles who took the important step of proving an X Division wrestler could be the Heavyweight champion. For that, AJ Styles is the ultimate X Division champion.

WWE Womens title

So who is the most influential women's champion of all-time? Is it Sensational Sherri? Allundra Blayze? Sable? Or Trish Stratus?

Trish certainly has a real claim to being one of the greatest women's champions in history, if not the greatest. But the woman who is picked as the most influential is the woman who is simply 'Fabulous'. **Moolah** was money for the WWF for many, many years, and was still competing and appearing for them right up to her death. When many women now are just 'divas', Moolah was a rough, tough woman who held the title with pride and vigour, and whose influence spread down through many generations.

There are many other titles I could have included here...who is the best AWA champion? The best Cruiserweight? The best of the IWGP champions? The best GHC champion?

Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the selections however, one thing is for sure. Delving through the histories of these titles gives us a look back at a sport that cared about its belts, and made the fans care about the belts. If Flair was champion, everyone watching it knew that. If Hogan was defending the title, we wanted to watch. And we need to preserve the integrity and importance of those belts if we want to keep people caring about the product. To paraphrase a popular TV show; "Save the titles, save the promotion..."

WWE 2010:

The New Generation .... Again!

By JUSTIN LABAR - justin.labar@yahoo.com

In 1994, the WWF began to promote the product and superstars as the start of a new generation. It was a time where new talent was on the rise and McMahon was in business to minimise the older guys such as Hulk Hogan, who at the time had just jumped ship to the competition.

Now in 2010, more new stars are on the ascent, older guys are beginning to slow down, oh and Hulk Hogan is a part of the competition.

Its funny how a staged "fake sport" goes in cycles.

That year we saw Yokozuna, who at the time was 28, Bret Hart, 37, Bob Backlund, 54, and Diesel, 35, in that order, were all world champions in the '94 calendar year.

Its amazing to see that now the age of the champions, especially those when they win it the first time, are so much younger. The actual age is pretty much the only thing that is going down, as everything is else is getting greater.

As we fast forward a decade, everything has multiplied. There is 2 world title belts to account for in the WWE, the amount of programming has grown, length of title reigns are shorter, so there is double the number of people holding the title belt in a single year.

More names, television shows, and pay-per-views are around to follow and keep score of. But if you look into it all, the same thing that was going on in 1994 is taking place now. We are seeing the older established guys who have had many runs begin to draw back. The Undertaker, Shawn Michaels, Triple H, are no longer constantly involved in the title picture. Some guys like Sheamus have won the belt, and others such as Kofi Kingston are elevating their way into higher profile feuds.

Vince McMahon continues to help create new stars. His competition led by Hulk Hogan brings in more of the "boys." WCW eventually had the New World Order, which started on the premise of the group being comprised of former McMahon made stars.

TNA now has guys who are best known as former WWE wrestlers. Just go ahead and count the amount of guys on the TNA roster who all were made in a WWE ring. The number is just about as high as the amount of title belts that Triple H has held!

For there to be a legitimate wrestling war to continue the cycle, TNA is going to have to find a way to trump the WWE. WCW did it for a while with a big budget and innovative ideas. Ideas that ranged from the invasion angle to giving away the taped results of RAW.

So what does TNA do? What is the weakness of WWE?

The WWE can hear that TNA is trying to load up their guns for a war, but WWE is still laying down with their eyes shut. They have been in first gear for several years because they haven't been challenged.

TNA has been fighting and crawling since they were born. I am not saying the fighting has always been entertaining or successful, but they have had a fight mentality to get the product to a higher level. They are hungry, versus the WWE who has passed out at the buffet line.

New faces and stars being put in the top spots is good, but you have to go beyond that. The promos have to be better, the weekly wrestling programming has to have wrestling. When that programming has wrestling, the wrestling has to be better. More time given for those who can lead their own matches, and play off the crowd.

There are the guys that commentators hail as future champions, or are often considered the stars of tomorrow – well tomorrow has come. If given the proper build up, I like seeing them get pushed. It has to go beyond that though. It does no good if you declare new stars as champions and main event guys, if the quality of the show and feuds are less than thrilling.

So WWE, keep the new generation coming. New faces and names are great to change and build with. But don't stop when their music hits and they walk out the curtain with some cool pyrotechnics. Repetitive booking to build a pay-per-view just doesn't cut it. Nobody wants to see their wrestling predictions come true each and every time. Remember when the beauty of pro wrestling was unpredictability? Now we see wrestler's in WWE seemingly following the same template for promo's, which makes for boring viewing.

All of that is a recipe for persuading the viewer to take a long bathroom break, or maybe even turning the channel to TNA.

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THE FUTURE OF ECW

| By JOHN M. MILNER - docmilner42@hotmail.com |

When the WWE brought ECW back to the airwaves in 2006, hardcore enthusiasts rejoiced, believing they were seeing the rebirth of "the Tribe of Extreme". With a roster that included Sabu, Tommy Dreamer, the Sandman and Rob Van Dam, this new ECW looked, at least at first, as if it would indeed be the throwback to the original Extreme Championship Wrestling.

Unfortunately for ECW purists, this "remake" of the beloved Philadelphia-based organisation, the one that had been lauded as an alternative to the WWE and (way back when, WCW), was quickly becoming more like ECW-lite. One by one, the old guard of ECW was "future endeavoured". The Sandman, Sabu, Rob Van Dam and even Paul Heyman had been moved out. The "Extreme Rules" bouts, once a staple of the new ECW, eventually disappeared. Tuning into ECW today, long-time fans of the old promotion will find the only similarity between the ECW of the late 1990s and WWE's ECW is the three call letters.

Or is it?

When people think back on the glory days of the original Extreme Championship Wrestling, they tend to focus in on the violent matches between stars such as Raven, Tommy Dreamer and the Sandman, the Pitbulls and the Dudley Boys. And certainly, one needs only search through the archives, the videos and Youtube offerings to find evidence of those "extreme" moments in ECW history.

But amid the chair shots, broken tables and busted heads were some other historical notes. ECW gave many a wrestler a shot at national exposure in North America. Eddie Guerrero, Dean Malenko, Rey Mysterio are but three names of wrestlers who made a name for themselves in ECW before heading to WCW and WWE. Yes, many of them had wrestled elsewhere before, but it was ECW where many became national names in the industry.

ECW GAVE MANY A WRESTLER A SHOT AT NATIONAL EXPOSURE IN NORTH AMERICA

And the last of that "old guard" from ECW to remain with the WWE, Tommy Dreamer had barely been in the business for three years (wrestling in International World Class Championship Wrestling and the Century Wrestling Alliance) before taking the first steps towards the storied career he would have by entering Extreme Championship Wrestling.

And so, if the new ECW isn't providing the sick bumps and extreme action its predecessor did, it is showing signs of similiarity in another fashion: giving young and up-and-comers a chance to shine. Intercontinental Champion John Morrison, U.S

Shelton Benjamin

Champion The Miz, Jack Swagger, former I-C and U.S. Champ Kofi Kingston and top contender Sheamus all spent time in ECW before being called up to Raw or Smackdown.

But the ECW roster is not completely made up of young, relatively unknown wrestlers. Veterans such as former European Champion William Regal, former Intercontinental Champion Shelton Benjamin and former NWA World Champion Christian stand side-by-side with newcomers like Ezekiel Jackson and Vladmir Kozlov (both of whom have experience on Smackdown/Raw).

And perhaps for wrestlers like Regal, Christian and Benjamin, ECW isn't the place to be. ECW isn't being treated like a second-class citizen, more like a no-class citizen. ECW has certainly become an afterthought for the rest of the WWE. ECW Title matches, when they occur on pay-per-view, are rarely hyped, especially compared to the World and WWE Championship matches.

ECW isn't being treated as an equal among the three brands of World Wrestling Entertainment, and it's time we stopped expecting it to be. WWE should move established stars like Christian and Benjamin back to the main rosters of Raw or Smackdown. While it's all well and good to see Christian and Benjamin at the forefront of the brand, that status does little for their careers. Meanwhile, for every main event and title match Christian, Benjamin and Regal compete in, that's one less opportunity for someone like Yoshi Tatsu, Tyler Reks or some other newcomer.

Perhaps that's where the strength of this new ECW is. Perhaps we're better off not expecting to tune in and see the reprisal of the Raven-Tommy Dreamer feud. Instead, ECW could be the entry point for the champions of the future for WWE, to place a corny phrase of this phenomenon.

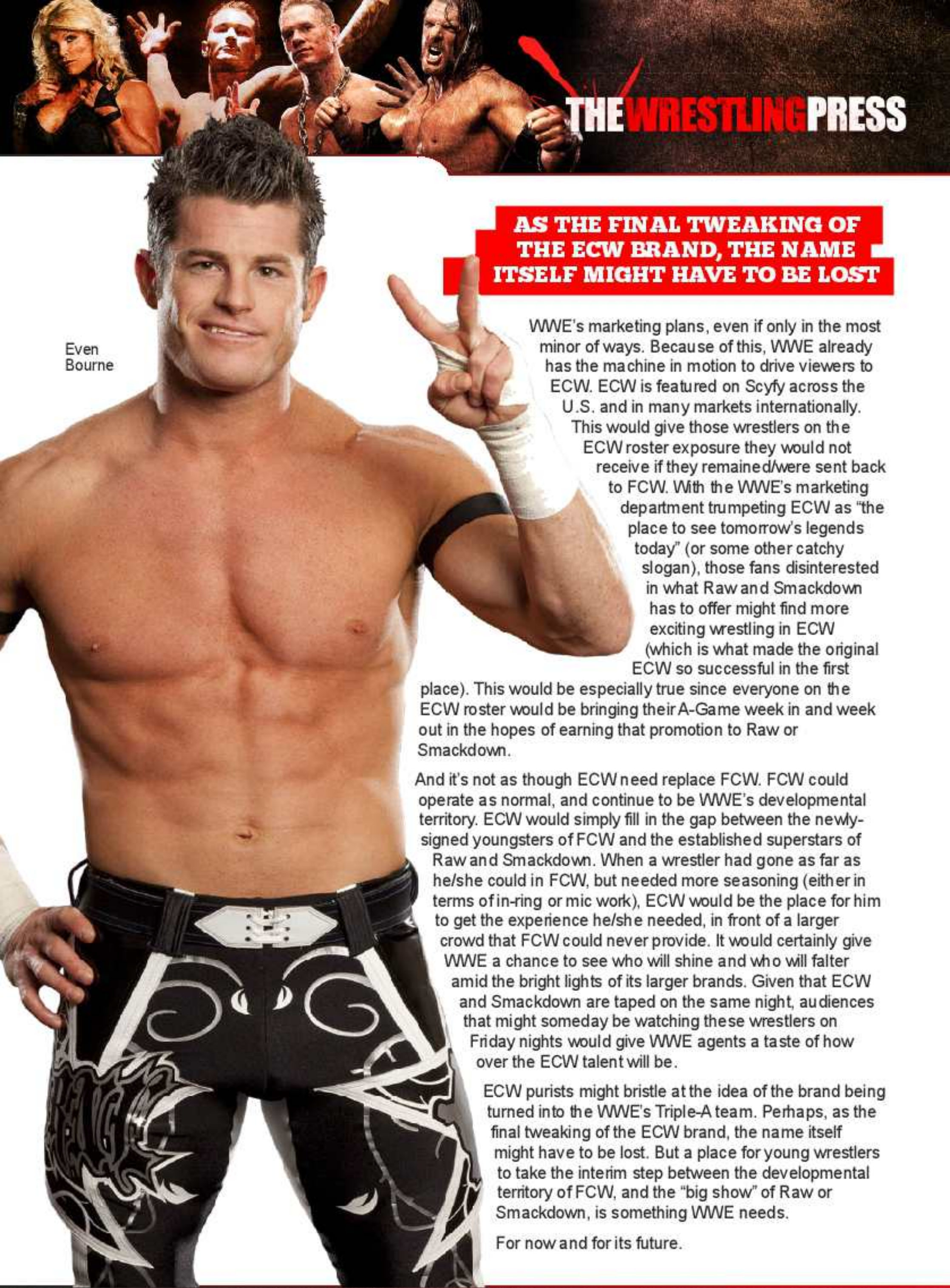
Instead of pretending they consider ECW to be on the same status as Raw or Smackdown (and certainly a case could be made they aren't really doing much of a job pretending), WWE needs to see the brand for what it should be: the next step up from their developmental territory, Florida Championship Wrestling.

Officially making ECW the "B-level" show that it has already become offers WWE, and many young talent on it's "Big Two" rosters, more flexibility when it comes to the career development. Many people are already assuming Evan Bourne, despite his exciting, in-ring style, will soon be "future endeavoured" because his career has stagnated (at best) since his move to the Raw roster. A move back to a more-youthful-oriented ECW, while deemed a demotion, would give him the opportunity to further work on his character, without becoming a Jobber-to-the-Stars, as he is now.

ECW COULD BE THE ENTRY POINT FOR CHAMPIONS OF THE FUTURE

Perhaps the best thing about this version of ECW is the fact there would be more of a level playing field. Tyler Reks wouldn't have to compete with the glass ceiling that is the "Cena-DX-Orton" show on RAW until he's got a little more experience under his belt. Yoshi Tatsu could compete in matches where the outcome, at least at this stage of his career, isn't so solidified that it becomes a glorified squash.

Some readers might wonder "Well, how would this be different than FCW?" And the answer is that, while WWE treats ECW as an afterthought compared to Raw and Smackdown, they will at least acknowledge its existence. Casual fans of WWE have no knowledge that FCW exists. ECW remains in the



Even Bourne

AS THE FINAL TWEAKING OF THE ECW BRAND, THE NAME ITSELF MIGHT HAVE TO BE LOST

WWE's marketing plans, even if only in the most minor of ways. Because of this, WWE already has the machine in motion to drive viewers to ECW. ECW is featured on Scyfy across the U.S. and in many markets internationally. This would give those wrestlers on the ECW roster exposure they would not receive if they remained/were sent back to FCW. With the WWE's marketing department trumpeting ECW as "the place to see tomorrow's legends today" (or some other catchy slogan), those fans disinterested in what Raw and Smackdown has to offer might find more exciting wrestling in ECW (which is what made the original ECW so successful in the first place). This would be especially true since everyone on the ECW roster would be bringing their A-Game week in and week out in the hopes of earning that promotion to Raw or Smackdown.

And it's not as though ECW need replace FCW. FCW could operate as normal, and continue to be WWE's developmental territory. ECW would simply fill in the gap between the newly-signed youngsters of FCW and the established superstars of Raw and Smackdown. When a wrestler had gone as far as he/she could in FCW, but needed more seasoning (either in terms of in-ring or mic work), ECW would be the place for him to get the experience he/she needed, in front of a larger crowd that FCW could never provide. It would certainly give WWE a chance to see who will shine and who will falter amid the bright lights of its larger brands. Given that ECW and Smackdown are taped on the same night, audiences that might someday be watching these wrestlers on Friday nights would give WWE agents a taste of how over the ECW talent will be.

ECW purists might bristle at the idea of the brand being turned into the WWE's Triple-A team. Perhaps, as the final tweaking of the ECW brand, the name itself might have to be lost. But a place for young wrestlers to take the interim step between the developmental territory of FCW, and the "big show" of Raw or Smackdown, is something WWE needs.

For now and for its future.

NICK BOCKWINKEL INTERVIEW

| By PHIL AUSTIN - PhilUK1@aol.com |

classicwrestling.com

In 2006 I had the privilege of having a 20 minute telephone conversation with Nick Bockwinkel as part of an article I was doing for Fighting Spirit magazine on the AWA. Here, for the first time, is the full unedited version of that interview.

TWP: Did you see much of the AWA prior to joining the organisation?

Nick Bockwinkel: No, not really. At the time that was still the era of the territorial system and I was wrestling in and around Georgia and the Southeast. I made a trip to Japan and upon returning to the States I was looking to make a move. A friend told me that the AWA would be a viable market for me. So I took their advice and I went there.

TWP: And it worked out very well for you. You wrestled much of your career as a heel. I presume you preferred working as a heel?

Nick Bockwinkel: Well, about 1969 is when I endeavoured on the grey side and from that time on until I

retired in 1987 those were my flying colours, so to speak. It's more fun to inspire a tired mind, so to speak, and to get them aroused was quite a bit of enjoyment.

TWP: Who were your inspirations when you started as a heel?

Nick Bockwinkel: Actually a gentlemen by the name of Captain Holmes, who was a Captain of the British Army in the Second World War and he managed a Lord James Blears from England, who was a very good wrestler. I had known Captain Holmes from about 1950-1951 as a teenager. He epitomised what I like to say was the command of the English language, so when someone tried to take a little tweak or dig at his Lordship, the Captain with extreme verbal savoir faire, would chop down whoever made the comment and I found that very interesting because he put the commoners in their place and I came to the conclusion that you can irritate, inspire or hurt people by just tweaking them a little bit rather than calling them all sorts of absurd names because then you are just being a brash, classless individual. Whether the person is very well educated or very lowly educated, they can tell when you are demeaning them and that gets them all burned up.

TWP: When you started in the AWA, you had a manager, Bobby Heenan with you. What are your memories of working with him?

Nick Bockwinkel: He personified the World championship category of a manager – he was the best there could possibly be. He had managed myself and Mr Ray Stevens for about a four or five year period as tag team champions and then managed me when I became World champion and he was superb. He was excellent as far as being able to get in the ring and perform, and his cutting wit and cunning was more than a complement to myself. My wit was more on an intellectual basis, his was a more scathing, acidic wit.

TWP: And what was Ray Stevens like to work with as a partner?

Nick Bockwinkel: Ray Stevens, from the 1950s going into perhaps the early 1980s, was the absolute

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finest in ring performer in the entire profession. He was not overly impressive looking as far as his physical stature, but at the same time everything he did, when he did it, how he did it, his sense of timing, of grasping the moment, was without question superb. To have tagged with him, and with Bobby Heenan as a manager, was a great joy and a help for me.

TWP: You held the AWA World title on many occasions. How important was holding that title to you as a wrestler?

Nick Bockwinkel: Well, if you had that title, supposedly you would be making the top money and of course that's very, very important to anybody in any endeavour and a judgment of one's success. But I'm not sure, if they simply wanted to hide me in a closet and pay me that much money, I might have liked that too!

TWP: People still look back on the AWA with a fair degree of reverence. Why do you think that is?

Nick Bockwinkel: I think it had a more pure atmosphere. It didn't go for real exotic extremes in personalities or characters, and the wrestling was what they sold more than anything, and they had people who could perform in the ring to a certain standard which I think was a higher standard to those of other organisations at the time, and they earned a certain degree of respect.

TWP: Was the locker room atmosphere one of respect as well?

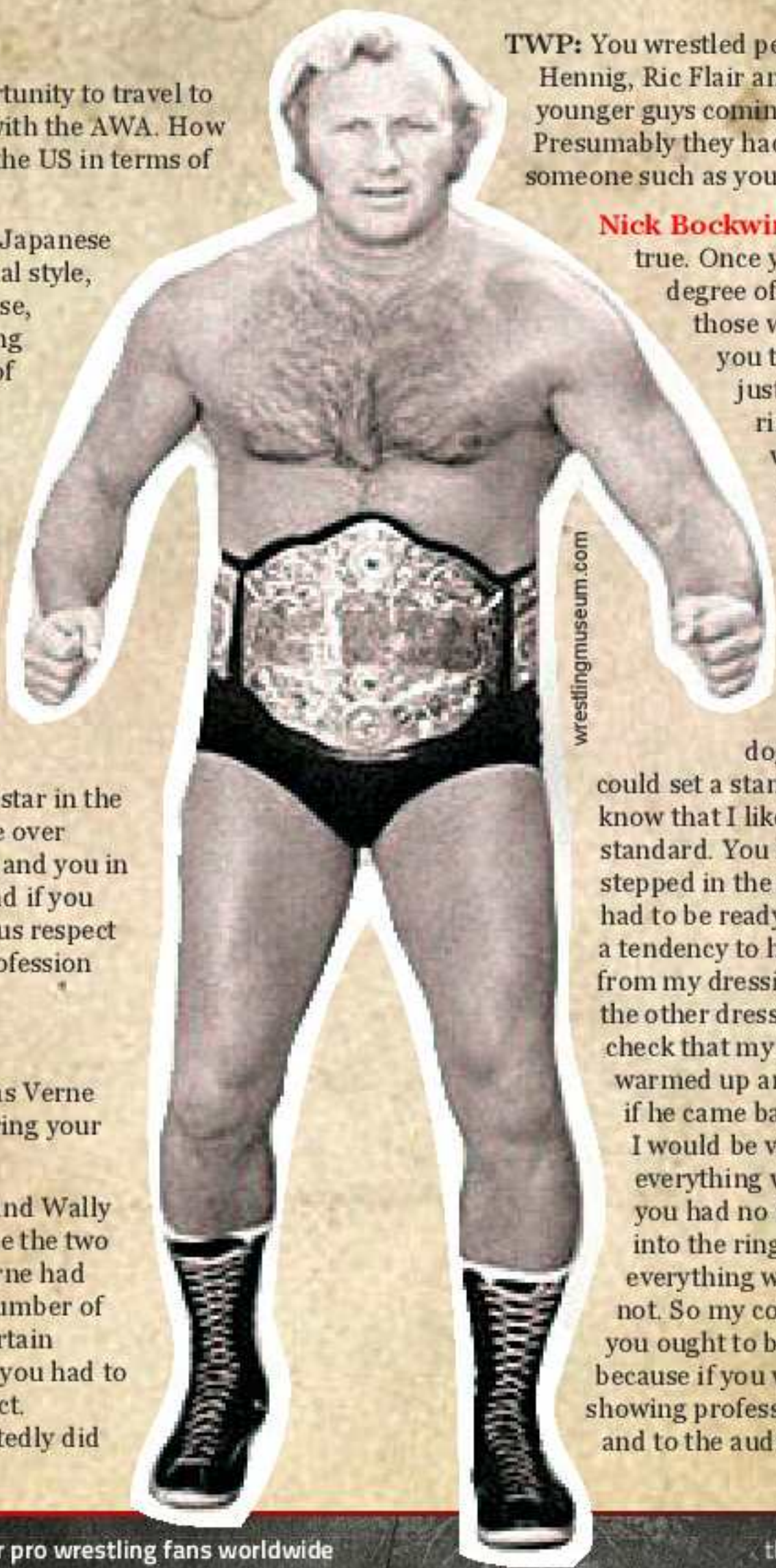
Nick Bockwinkel: Extremely. Probably one of the most talented people I stepped into the ring with or against from that locker room was Billy Robinson, and to me he along with Mr Stevens were both superb performers

TWP: You had the opportunity to travel to Japan during your time with the AWA. How did Japan compare with the US in terms of wrestling?

Nick Bockwinkel: The Japanese boys learned a professional style, and were extremely intense, literally enjoying thumping on your body regardless of the nature of the beast. They worked very, very hard in the ring and set a very high standard, higher than that of the United States, and so physically you could take one hell of a good beating, so you had to stay in shape, you had to perform and you had to earn your stripes. You may have been a fair size star in the States, but once you came over there they raised the bar, and you in turn had to match that and if you did you gained tremendous respect from everybody in the profession over there.

TWP: What influence was Verne Gagne on your career during your time in the AWA?

Nick Bockwinkel: He and Wally Karbo, the promoter, were the two premier people there. Verne had been AWA champion a number of times, and he too set a certain standard in the ring, and you had to match it to gain his respect. Needless to say I undoubtedly did that, because for the last 17 years of my career I wrestled in the AWA. He broke a lot of people into the profession: Ric Flair, Brunzell, Greg Gagne, Ken Patera, and that is something he should be very proud of, as most of them were very successful. He set a standard by example.



TWP: You wrestled people like Curt Hennig, Ric Flair and some of the younger guys coming up at the time. Presumably they had a lot to learn from someone such as yourself.

Nick Bockwinkel: That's very true. Once you obtain a certain degree of success, there are those who will learn from you through osmosis, just by getting into the ring with you. They will go home, look at video tape and wonder 'why did I do that there, I should have done this there' and so it was in my premier position, as one of the top dogs so to speak, I could set a standard and let people know that I liked being at that standard. You knew when you stepped in the ring with me you had to be ready to go. I always had a tendency to have the seconds from my dressing room go over to the other dressing rooms and check that my opponents were warmed up and ready to go, and if he came back and told me that I would be very pleased because everything was spontaneous, you had no idea once you got into the ring how fast everything would take off or not. So my contention was that you ought to be ready to go, because if you were you were showing professional respect to me and to the audience.

UMAGA

On December 4th the world of professional wrestling lost another of its stars when Eddie Fatu, best known for his time in WWE as Umaga passed away. His wife found him in his chair at home not breathing and with blood coming out of his nose after falling asleep watching television and had suffered a heart attack. He was rushed to a local hospital in Houston, Texas but died after suffering a second heart attack.

Eki "Eddie" Fatu was born in San Francisco in March 1973 and was a member of the Anoa'I family, his mother being the sister of Afa and Sika of the Wild Samoans tag team. His two older brothers were Sam who became The Tonga Kid and Solofa Jr. who found fame as one half of the Headshrinkers tag team and later of course as Rikishi. His cousin was Dwayne Johnson aka The Rock.

He was trained by his uncles at the Wild Samoan Pro Wrestling Training Center and made his pro debut in 1995 for WXW (owned by Afa). Just a year later he joined WWE and with his cousin Matt formed a tag team in developmental territory Heartland Wrestling Association. The pair wrestled in other indy promotions wrestling under names such as the Samoan Gangstas and the Island Boyz.

His big break came when he returned to WWE in 2002 under the name of Jamal with the tag team '3 Minute Warning' working for Eric Bischoff the GM of Raw. Memorable moments included wrecking the gay wedding on Smackdown. A year later though he was released from his contract reportedly after becoming involved in a bar fight.

Under the name of Ekmo, he appeared in TNA the following year teaming up with Sonny Siaki to feud with America's Most Wanted. He left TNA in November 2003 and then appeared for All Japan Pro Wrestling again as Jamal. Again he found himself restricted to the tag team division forming teams with Justin Credible and more successfully with Taiyo Kea winning the AJPW Unified World Tag Team Championship and the World's Strongest Tag Team League in 2004.

The end of 2005 saw him make his return to WWE and initially it looked as if 3 Minute Warning would make their return until Rosey was released from his contract. It was in April 2006 that the character of Umaga first appeared on Raw as your stereotypical WWE Samoan savage who couldn't speak American so needed to have Armando Alejandro Estrada as his manager.

Umaga was given a high-profile start to his career feuding with Ric Flair and defeating him at the 'Backlash' PPV. Matches against Triple H, Shawn Michaels and WWE Champion John Cena followed. His push on Raw continued as he began working as an enforcer for the McMahon family and feuded with Kane beating him on several occasions including a Loser Leaves Raw match and a bout at Cyber Sunday. By this time Umaga still hadn't lost by pinfall or submission in WWE and a feud with John Cena over the WWE title began. Umaga was given title shots at New Years Revolution where he was finally pinned and at the Royal Rumble he again lost to Cena this time in a Last Man Standing match that was well received by the critics

Umaga didn't receive any more title shots but his biggest match in WWE was just months away. He was chosen by Mr. McMahon to represent him in the forthcoming Battle of the Billionaires match at WrestleMania 23 but before that he won his first major title in WWE when he beat Jeff Hardy for the Intercontinental belt.

He feuded with Bobby Lashley who was the representative of Donald Trump at WrestleMania 23, but he lost the match and McMahon lost his hair. At 'Backlash' Umaga teamed up with Vince and Shane against Lashley winning the ECW title for Vince.

Once the Lashley feud ended without Umaga getting his hands on the ECW title, he regained his IC title from Santino Marella and his days as a heel looked numbered as he teamed up with former rival John Cena and successfully defended his IC title against Mr. Kennedy and Carlito at Summerslam. The face turn didn't last long though as he attacked Jeff Hardy on Raw and just a week later lost his title to him. At No Mercy he lost to Triple H in a WWE title match and then began a feud with Batista losing a totally forgettable match to him at WrestleMania 24. The feud with Jeff Hardy resumed soon after as he lost a Falls Count Anywhere match to him at One Night Stand.

October 2007 saw Umaga famously destroy UK wrestler Andy Boy Simmonz on Raw in a Street Fight followed by a First Blood match and then a Cage match.

June 2008 saw him drafted to Smackdown where he feuded with Mr. Kennedy and The Big Show but In August he suffered a torn PCL putting him out of action for five months. He returned at the end of January this year and later feuded with CM Punk. May 2009 saw him speaking in English for the first time as Umaga and lost to Punk at Extreme Rules. He was released in June 2009 after a second violation of the Wellness Policy. He'd also refused to go into rehab.

November saw him touring Australia on the Hulk Hogan series of shows and they proved to be his last matches in professional wrestling.

■ by Steve Ashfield

FIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Part 1: Production

by Kieran Lefort - kieranlefort@gmail.com

Your booking is compelling, your action is revolutionary, your audiences are huge, your production values are dazzling and your stars are over like Rover. So why isn't your wrestling promotion on TV?

A couple of issues ago, Phil Austin wrote a great article on how to go about shooting wrestling, full of do's and don'ts and how to get the best out of your show footage. This article aims to go one step further, building on the information in Phil's article to take your footage from good to ready for the perpetual Holy Grail of British wrestling, TV.

What I'm about to tell you isn't, by any means, all there is to it and, if you're a wrestling promoter, you're probably going to want paramedics on standby for when you start to figure out how much this is all going to cost, but hopefully I can't point you in the right direction and, at the very least, make your DVDs look a bit nicer.

SETTING UP YOUR CAMERAS

Let's start with camera placement. Phil referred to it as "the third camera", but to me the hard cam is the most important camera in your setup. In film terms, it's your master shot. If something goes wrong with your ringside cams, you've always got your wide master.

The hard camera needs, that's NEEDS, to be raised up. Just having it on the floor at the full extent of the tripod isn't good enough; you're going to need some sort of platform. In some venues, this is easy; York Hall has the balcony, Broxbourne Civic Hall has the last row of raked seating for example. Failing that, find a couple of tables, pop 'em together and assign your lightest camera op to the hard camera.

Your hard cam should be looking down on the ring somewhat. Look at the screen image. If the top rope closest to you doesn't look like it's touching or below the middle rope of the opposite side, the hard cam needs raising up and pointing down more. A shallower angle than this and your ring can look flat, as if there's no space for the wrestlers to move between the far and near ropes.

The hard cam should be placed either opposite the entranceway or opposite the largest portion of your crowd. This is pretty venue specific and you'll usually have to settle for one or the other. Somewhere like the Morecambe Dome, while a great venue, is really hard to shoot in this respect. The natural entrance way is the stage, which you can only get one, maybe two rows of seats in front of, but is opposite a huge bank of seating. The natural place for the hard cam is at the top of this bank, next to the tech area. In places like this, you want your ringside cams to get frequent shots that show how full that bank of seating really is.

In your hard cam shot, you should be able to see all four ringposts, the ringside area either side and in front of the ring and as many seats as you can fit in the shot before the wrestlers start to look too small. A wide-angle lens might help here.

The ring should be in the horizontal centre of your shot and for God's sake, make sure your hard cam shot is level. A good tripod will have a spirit level built in just below the head. Get the bubble in the circle, double-check by eye and you're laughing.

You can get by with two cameras (one hard cam, one ringside), heck, ECW did it for years, but it's really not recommended. Your show is more than likely going to be post-produced (shot on tape, edited on a computer later), so your editor is going to want as many options as possible.

So, who is this idiot telling you how to get your product on the telly?

I'm a professional cameraman and editor and have been shooting and editing everything from short films to movie premieres to, yes, pro-wrestling, for fourteen years. Most specifically for this article, I was responsible for all 26 episodes of the 2004 series of FWA TV. I wrote, directed & produced the presenter links, recruited & organised the camera team, operated one of the ringside cameras at each live event (also shooting, and often devising, any interviews, promos and backstage segments), edited the TV show (including creating graphics, video packages, adverts, TV spots etc.) and delivered the finished programme each week to the playout centre.

Then I did it all again for forty-something episodes of RQW, but this time with a live on-the-night vision mix and a little bit of booking on top. As part of the Spectrum Multimedia family, I also shot and/or cut things for most of the higher profile UK companies including 1PW, IPW:UK, 3CW and WAW. I've also shot and cut MMA, K-1, kickboxing and amateur-style wrestling.

I'm now out of wrestling, plying my trade elsewhere in the film, TV and video industry, but I thought I'd impart the things I learned (mostly on the job) in the hope that somebody with the cash, the vision and the contacts (for it will take all three) can get a good British wrestling product back on TV.

The minimum setup you should be looking at is one hard cam and two handhelds at ringside. If the money extends to it, get a fourth camera, stick it next to the hard camera and use it to get close-up shots. Shot well, you wouldn't believe how much more expensive the footage from this camera can make your show look. If you're a fan of the Japanese isometric (corner-to-corner) shot, go nuts and have one of those as well, but not at the expense of your "straight on" hard camera.

Before all that, though, we need to talk white balance. Put simply, natural and artificial light are two different colours. The human eye can compensate for this, your cameras can't. Screw it up and your picture's going to come out either orange or blue.

When it comes to wrestling, the easiest way to set white balance is to gather all your cameras at ringside and have your lighting man set the lights as they are due to be during a match, then get a volunteer to stand in the ring with a piece of white paper (the back of the running order or the back of a poster will do). Frame up each camera in turn so that the white paper fills the whole of the screen and hit your "white balance" button. If the camera doesn't have a manual white balance button, you probably shouldn't be trying to shoot footage for TV on it.

Leave your volunteer in the ring and go place your cameras; we're now going to set the exposure level. First, make sure the "gain" setting is set to "0". Gain artificially raises the brightness in dark areas of your picture, but does so at the expense of introducing visual noise (in the form of grainy, little dots) into the picture. Gain can be useful in some situations, but this isn't one of them.

Your camera should have a "zebra stripes" option (again, if it doesn't, this footage shouldn't be destined for TV), flick it on and set it to 70%. Zoom into the face of your volunteer as much as you can and focus up. Take a look at your image. See all the little lines jigging about in it? Wherever these appear, your image is over-exposed. Find your iris dial and turn it down till all the lines disappear from your guinea pig's face. Now turn it back up one notch and you're done.

As for the ringside cameras, simply set the exposure to "auto". This way, they'll match the hard camera pretty well for the bulk of the show, but will also self-adjust should the action spill to darker areas of the building.

SOUND

With a bit of luck, your hard cam has ended up near the audio desk. Happy days! This means nice, clean microphone sound and music for you. Find your camera's XLR socket. It's round, about a centimetre across and has holes for a triangular arrangement of three small, round pins. Can't find one? You're in the same boat as the people with no white balance button or zebras then.

Plug an XLR cable in and run the other end to the sound desk. You want a "line level" connection. Some desks might only have a phono (the red and white/black ones like on the back of your TV) or 1/4" ("quarter-inch", long, silver metal plug, like for a guitar amp) out. Now might be a good time to mention that your camera bag should contain some adapters. Maplin is your friend.

Get the sound guy to pop a CD in or tell you at length about his breakfast while he sets your output to between -6db and 0db (sometimes also called "unity") and head back to the hard cam with some headphones. Make sure the camera is set to take sound from the sockets, rather than the onboard mic and that the level is set

to "line", not "mic". You'll know if you've got it wrong as the sound in the headphones will be distorted.

A lot of cameras have a handy limiter that will stop the sound peaking over a certain level. If you can find this function, set it to -3db and flick your sound level to "auto". If the camera doesn't have this, you're going to have to set the peak level manually. Wrestlers always hold the mic too close to their mouths and shout when it comes to in-ring promos, so get someone to do this while you twiddle your audio input so the audio bars don't go above about -6db.

The camera will more than likely have two XLR sockets. You don't need a desk feed for each. In fact, I recommend, attaching a microphone to the other one so you also have a channel of room ambience/crowd noise for when you come to edit. Make sure the ringside cameras are set to record through the onboard mic so you have lots of lovely crowd sound from down there as well.

WIDESCREEN WRESTLING CAN TAKE A BIT OF GETTING USED TO

ASPECT RATIO

Notice how TVs these days are all oblong, rather than square as they used to be? So should your footage be.

All new British TV programming for any channel worth its salt (and, let's face it, those are the ones you should be aiming for) is shot and broadcast in 16:9 aspect ratio. Widescreen wrestling can take a bit of getting used to, but if it's good enough for WWE, it's good enough for you. Not to labour the point, but I don't care if your US or Japanese torrents are in 4:3 or what shape *The Daily Show* is, thou shalt shoot nothing but 16:9.

If your channel asks you for a 4:3 version, fine, you can do that in post-production. You should, however, shoot in 16:9 or you'll be stuck on that crappy channel for good.

KIT

So, what should you be shooting all this on? Well, ideally DigiBeta, but those cameras are large, expensive and need an experienced operator, ditto their HD equivalents.

My recommendation in the Sony Z5. It's small, has amazing picture quality and, very importantly for wrestling, performs very well in low light. New, they go for about £3500. Failing that, the older Z1 is similar and a still a great camera, it's just not as hot in low light.

MiniDV and DVCAM just don't cut it any more for TV. These formats are highly compressed (most of the information coming in through the lens is "thrown away" by the processor to get an image on the tape) and will result in an image that looks weak at best and pixellated to the point of being unwatchable at worst. A lot of TV stations will reject DV footage out of hand. Ten, or even five, years ago, you might have gotten through, but we now live in a high-definition televisual world and standards are higher.

PEOPLE

For all this, you're going to need good camera ops. Your options are: -

1) Find a good professional camera operator and teach them how wrestling works,

2) Find someone who knows wrestling inside out and teach them how to use a camera.

Both methods have their pros and cons. For example, a professional cameraman is likely to come with his own kit, but may see it as "just another job" and not really care about the wrestling element. A smart wrestling fan will have seen innumerable hours of wrestling and know, for example, when the babyface's comeback is going to start and what the wrestlers' signature spots are, but may provide you with a badly-composed, out-of-focus shot.

I found a mix of both is the way to go. Each can teach the other about the area in which they are lacking and, over time, the quality of your shot product will improve as everyone reaches the same skill level.

For the record, in all my time shooting wrestling, I came across precisely one pro cameraman who picked up wrestling to the point of becoming a smart wrestling fan. I also found precisely one wrestling fan who understands camerawork and image composition to the point where I'd be happy to send him out on non-wrestling camera jobs.

While not a fully comprehensive guide, that should give you enough to think about.

Next month, we'll look at what to do with all this footage. We'll talk editing, graphics, music, post-production sound and delivery.

FORUM FROLICS

By PWPfrog - froggylllc@aol.com

Threads in Forum : General Whackiness

Thread / Thread Starter

WWE PG Ratings

"The attitude era plus PG = Epic Fail.
I can just see Stone Cold walking out and saying if you want me to open a can a whoop-butt on Vince McMahon gimme a Heck Yeah." **Spiralshock** *(I demand that someone implements this idea right now!!!)*

In response

"Oh I agree, the WWE wants to make another 'era' but it's not another 'Attitude era', it's the 'Fluffy Bunnies and Rainbows era'." **Double J** *(Awwwww, I like that, but can we have some My Little Ponys and Care Bears too?!)*

Most Annoying Catch Phrases

"If the Miz says "REALLY?" one more time I swear throw my shoe at the screen." **xtremebadass** *(From the same person also on this thread....)*

"I always want to gouge my eyes out whenever R-Truth comes out, I am embarrassed for him." *(I feel sorry for this guy, watching WWE obviously gives him some issues).*

Batista turning heel

"This whole segment verged on prison rape. It almost looked like he was beating his girlfriend.
I honestly hope they have an extremely short 1 month feud with Batista absolutely destroying" *(I'm scared!)*

Cena in an Iron Match

"Thank god we here in Britain don't have to pay for it..!! I'm wondering just how many cups of tea I can go and make in an hour. It seems like the 'creative' mob (and I use the term very loosely) sat down and thought "now what would be the worst piece of crap match we can could up with?" - well they nailed it this time didn't they! What's next - Jillian vs Maria in a TLC match?..??" **JayBee87** *(Glad I'm not the only one who wonders about making multiple cups of tea)*

Underrated Wrestlers

"I think there are 3 superstars which are underrated and there all big uns! Kane, the Big Show and The Great Khali. All have had spells at the top but have never been given the chance to sustain. They should have a super heavy weight elimination chamber, Taker vs Show vs Kane vs Khali vs Mark Henry vs Big Daddy V." **THE ONE TOM MACK** *(OK I'm just off to cancel sky sports incase they actually do book that!!!)*

Shane McMahon quits

I'd say he quit after seeing 5 minutes of a recent Raw show. **Dave7g**

Kevin Thorn

interview

| By DARREN WOOD - dtwooduk@hotmail.com |

You Came into WWE as Mordecai, what did you think of that gimmick and what went wrong?

That gimmick was great and I could have done a lot of things, the ultimate fact was I got into a bar fight like a week before that character was debuting. I beat a kid up pretty bad, he was in hospital for 3 weeks and I was going to get sued and WWE was going to get sued. It was a learning experience I guess, was I defending myself? Yeah. But hindsight being 20-20, maybe I should have just let the kid hit me with the bottle instead of punching him. It was definitely a learning experience. I was young, dumb and I might not have been ready for that.

ecw.com

WWE seemed still, even after this incident, very keen on you because they brought you back?

Yeah, I mean, I am well rounded. Am I the greatest wrestler? No, but I can talk, I can work and I can certainly go out there and hang with the big boys. I'm not a losing effort, I go out there to give everything I can every time and I'm always learning.

Do you feel you were more ready when returning as Kevin Thorn?

I definitely feel that what I did with my Kevin Thorn character I was so much more prepared, more ready to be a WWE star so it worked itself out in the end.

Did you ever feel WWE were fully behind you in any of your gimmicks?

I think it was hit and miss, I think sometimes they didn't know what to do with me and they had the mentality of where do we go from here kind of thing, which was a shame. I had some of my best matches ever with Rob Van Dam and we were doing so much on the ECW house shows. I went from being just a lower card guy to being in the main event with RVD at nearly every single house show, I mean that was a feat in itself. We were going out there and tearing the house down. A lot of that was because Rob is so over but also a lot of it was me too. I went out there and worked my ass off and I worked the gimmick well.

Me and Ariel (Shelley) had such good chemistry and we did good stuff and they kept telling us 'we're gonna push you we're gonna do it now.' But then it would be 'ok not yet'. I then started working matches with Bobby Lashley and we were having fantastic matches everywhere, they then tell me that they are going to do something with me and Bobby and then that dropped off.

So it was like every time they tell me they are going to give me the ball so I can run, they hold back for whatever reason. I don't think that Vince fully got how over the vampire gimmick was. With Twilight, True Blood and Vampire Diaries there is a massive list that is culturally out there and they're awesome. WWE missed the boat and we were before vampires hit mainstream hard, we could have followed that right into the mainstream media.

Was it disheartening at all being put on the ECW brand, knowing what the history of that company was?

No because the guys like RVD and Dreamer rode the wave of glory that was ECW, they had such a passion and desire that when I got put on there I saw their passion. The new guys were the underdogs and so we wanted to go out there and prove that we weren't. It's really amazing, every time we went out there and proved ourselves the ratings would start to rise, but then WWE wouldn't know what to do next. We knew that they were cutting us off at the knees every time. I'm not sure Vince was ever fully behind ECW because he didn't create that, yeah he brought it back but it was the brain child of Paul Heyman. ECW is still chanted to this day whenever there is a big bump, so obviously that company got over huge.

Do you feel that if you went back to WWE now with them being more family orientated they might not be interested in doing the vampire gimmick?

I don't know, I would have to just go with whatever they wanted me to do. I mean they had Gangrel in

the 90's and he was way before the times, he was such an awesome character with the entrance and the lights. That kind of thing was what drew people in, when the ratings war was going on WWE was so edgy at the time and wrestling wasn't such a watered down product back then.

That's the problem with wrestling right now, it's so generic. When there's a guy who goes out there and has an over the top gimmick that the fans love, it seems that promoters think they have to hold back and keep it family orientated. Which I am all for because I have a child and I think that some of the sex and stuff like that shouldn't be in wrestling. But some of the gimmicks could be more colourful and more animated, sometimes it seems we want to be too much like UFC. We wanna be perceived as real, but *we are real* because we are as physical as can be and there's not a UFC guy, a football player or anyone else who can do what we do and be as physical as we are day in and day out.

Why did you leave WWE?

I asked for my release because I wasn't getting used and I wanted to work, I wanted to go out there and wrestle. At the time they didn't have a spot for me and I would rather go out and do my own thing than just sit around and wait, I left on good terms though and could come back.

Is it hard going from company to company instead of the regularity of the WWE?

Yeh it's different, I miss the guys in the locker room. Some locker rooms you come into and it looks like a great crew and the guys are great but then sometimes you come into a locker room and you see people who should never call themselves a wrestler. Guys who are fat and don't work out yet somehow they went to a training school and they get to call themselves wrestlers. That's what really pisses me off, there are guys out there that bust

their asses but they never catch that break. They are probably better than me and a lot of guys but they never get their chance.

Do you feel that wrestlers in WWE think of the boys in the locker room more as family than the people waiting for them at home?

Sometimes yeah, we are on the road with each other day in and day out. The stories that we have sometimes you can't go home and tell your family or friends because nobody really gets it. They don't know what it's like being on the road, suffering and driving from town to town being tired and beat up. It's hard living the rock star life and you do yearn for home.

What do you think of UK wrestling and UK wrestlers?

I love it here in the UK. The guys over here work for various companies and they do their thing and they are great. There is tons and tons of talent over here – guys like Martin Stone, The Juice and Kris Travis who I did an angle with at 1PW. That young guy has a hell of a look and probably a hell of a future, I mean he does awesome stuff. Guys like this are young and they are the future, if they can step up then the future looks good.

© Darren Wood

THERE ARE GUYS THAT BUST THEIR ASSES BUT NEVER CATCH THAT BREAK

Do you research or know a lot about the companies you agree to work with before working for them?

I try to, the worst thing about working for different companies is I've been burnt by several promotions, but you learn. I try to keep up and find out who works for the company and who I am wrestling with. That way I know what I am walking into.

Is there a massive difference from doing a TV taping to doing a non televised live event?

Huge difference, TV you have got time limits, they gotta get commercials in there and they got to make sure the matches are on time. But when you get to work a house show there's no fireworks or lights – it's just go out there, have a good time and entertain the fans. You get way more time to do your craft and that's the best part about house shows – you go out there and really give it to the fans.

Career ambitions?

I would like to go back to a major company whether it be WWE or TNA and go straight to the top and show all my fans what I am about.

Whats next for Kevin Thorn?

Keep reaching for the sky and keep doing my thing. I love going out there, meeting the fans and if they want to keep up with me they can add me on Facebook at **seventhorn** or they can go to my website which is **www.kevin-thorn.com** and I always keep that up to date so they can find me, come out and see me.

THE SUNSHINE SANATOGEN TOUR,

or How Hogan and Flair Sold Out Their Legacy For A Bit Of Pretty Green

By THE CYNIC - hearditallbefore@hotmail.com

What ya gonna do when Hulk Hogan takes his teeth out of soak, straps on his knee brace, wanders down the aisle for a half price OAP buffet and dribbles all over youuuu?

Don't get your panties in a wad. I'm not ragging on old people; I know you have a father/mother/aunt who is very special to you and should be allowed to die with dignity - as long as they do it after they've changed that will in your favour, eh? No, I'm not ragging on those people (and remember, they are people), I'm ragging on Hogan. And that's fine. It's fine because we gave him mucho money for the "entertainment" he's favoured us with over the years - matches with Zeus, matches with the Warrior, the NWO feather boa years. Remember? Je reste ma valise.

Hogan lives and dies by the media. He wanted it. He got it. Now the media is taking bites out of his ass and chunks out of his bank balance. Live by the sword, die etc. You know the drill. So does Hogan. He was never going to become rich and famous for his grappling guile; big boot, leg drop, erm...that's it. But we didn't want that, did we? Hogan is an entertainer; protected by Uncle Vince, maybe stealing from Jesse Ventura (and many others), he was the embodiment of the World Wrestling Federation.

He didn't need to fight, his presence was enough. The big-eyed antics, the catchphrases, the posedown, these were the shortcuts to the WWF/E brand.

Hogan was a children's entertainer. The dayglo, cartoon, behemoth world of that time was ideal for a faux-caring Terry B who was also a peddler of Vinnieworld and all the merch that came with it. When he exhorted us to take our vitamins (a shot in each cheek, possibly), say our prayers and all that guff, he was selling the way of life.

Because the families needed to be happy that their kids could watch the product safely, Hogan's message was essentially Republican; consume,

stay patriotic, don't espouse alternative lifestyles (like that pastor you gave all your money to, just to get "deprogrammed"). He was a company mouthpiece, like all other WWF/E employees; reliant on the patronage of the Billionaire. Hogan learnt this the hard way. He thought he was bigger than the ring. He thought he could have a media career because he was bigger than life. "Suburban Commando", "Mr Nanny", "Thunder In Paradise"- Schwarzenneger was a big bloke with an even bigger character and he made it. But, dear Hoges, he has charisma. You? Not so much.

And so, adrift from his WWE and WCW berths, clinging to them latterly like a drowning man clings to the wreckage, he is just another celebrity, famous for being famous. How many of those are there in the States? He swapped one patronage for another; this one, from the American public, is far more fickle and there's no benevolent boss to help him now. So we get "Hogan Knows Best" (although I'm not sure of that), his attempt to enter the mainstream TV market, which is shuffled in the pack with all the others. Yep, it was that good.

Of course, you have to be a bit edgy to be a media star. A few skeletons in the closet. But not a whole

graveyard full. And so Hogan has been hurt by the problems with his son, his messy divorce and his daughter's stalled career. Actually, he's been suckerpunched in the pumpkin patch. We've scrutinised his life and found it wanting - all his fault. Now, Ozzy had the same issue - the Prince of Darkness revealed as a very sweet shambling wreck - but he was still in the game and has produced an album of blistering Metal to reassert his claim. Hogan can't do that, he can't perform in-ring to even his limited standards - two hips but no hooray, Mr H? And so he's run into the arms of TNA, where he can probably dodge that work bullet by doing GM work, which will probably be Dixie Carter's own brand of Horlicks.

Hogan is caught in a net of his own making. Hoist by his own petard. It's a hubristic aphorism. Well, now you have three things to look up.

Flair is in a different place. It's a different pile of shit, but it smells just as bad. Flair has just gone through a divorce and we don't really care. Why? Because he's not a media personality. He won't be able to step out of the ring and into the mainstream media. He's known as the consummate wrestler. That's an incredible achievement and very desirable. When you're in your prime. But when you're not and start looking around for opportunities, it's the kind of kudos that's going to tie you to the squared circle. Flair was a great grappler. He gave great stick. But he stayed in the ring too long. Yes, he was comfortable. Yes, fans still enjoyed him. But every time he stepped between those ropes, he reminded us of how good he used to be. His talent, his reputation, his legacy was tarnished as badly as if he'd lent it to Paris Hilton.

Hogan sold out his future because his personal life has been compromised. Flair has sold out his future by fighting Father Time. It's a battle no-one wins. Not even Anne Robinson. He's earned a lot of cash in his time, but it seems he's spent it - the jetflyin', limousine ridin' son of a gun was not accountant visitin' or financial advisor meetin' perhaps. He needs to keep going and this is all he knows.

We knew enough not to believe his retirement. That's like believing that David Cameron loves the NHS. Flair can't keep away from the ring and maybe his need for cash gives him an excuse. And how is he going to make the money he needs outside of those ropes? He has little stroke outside wrestling, but those speaking engagements, those signing sessions, aren't going to fill the coffers, even in fiscally irresponsible times.

To be the man you got to beat the man? He might have just beaten himself.

And so they both went on tour. Not in the US; it was thought that they wouldn't be a seller, after all, Hogan pulled in a pretty risible number of fans (although Jerry Lawler's non-appearance can't have helped) for a "Superevent" in Memphis in 2007. They rocked (or perhaps that should be foxtrotted) the Antipodes - Australia.

The short tour was an 80's celebration, certainly, and who would have thought that Brutus would be on a Hogan card? The crowd popped for what wrestling used to be and apparently contained a lot of those who don't watch the WWE any more.

But it wasn't a sellout. Apparently not even close. Reports state that the promoters were disappointed with sales and parts of the auditorium were curtained off. A sad state. America doesn't deify 'em. Neither does the Commonwealth.

The wrestling world is what they've done. The wrestling world is what they do. Hogan can't earn money elsewhere. Flair might not want to. But by offering themselves as living monuments to their past greatness, they cheapen it. When you've got very little else, memories are all that you can trade

It's fools gold. Hogan and Flair had better check their progress, or they'll soon have nothing left. Shakespeare (yes Shakespeare, you Terry Pratchett-reading mouth breathers) once wrote "he who steals my purse steals trash...but he that filches from me my good name robs me of that which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed"; Terry and Ric would do well to listen up. But then he also wrote "exit, pursued by a bear" and we've never even mentioned George "The Animal" Steele!

The Cynic

TOP 3 WRESTLING MOMENTS OF 2009

For a bit of fun some of The Wrestling Press regulars have jotted down their favourite memories of 2009....

Phil Austin

1) Witnessing Dragon Gate live in the UK.
Nothing at all compared to seeing the Dragon Gate promotion live. The atmosphere, the incredible matches, seeing the stars of Dragon Gate compete at their very best and finishing off with two bona fide matches of the year was second to none. Well done to Mark Sloan for making a lot of wrestling fans' dreams a reality.

2) Sara Del Rey v Hamada
In 2009 I was privileged to see a live Shimmer show for the first time. And what a great show to see. Everyone worked their hardest and produced great action, but none better than Del Rey and Ayako Hamada who had a knock down drag out affair that everyone needs to go out of their way to see.

3) The rise of Sheamus and Drew
Seeing two men who were such a part of the UK scene so recently not only enter, but rise to the top level of the wwe in 2009, was a real thrill. Hopefully this will open the door for others to enter. Guys like Martin Stone, Leroy Kincaide and others would be a tremendous addition to Vinces company.

PWPfrog

will admit that I have been a bit lapse watching wrestling during the past year as all my attention was focused on my partner's own promotion. Just lately we haven't had the time to check out other promotions as much we used to do, which I do regret somewhat. I fully intended to get on top of ROH and TNA this year but that didn't happen either!
So here are my top 3 moments of 2009, albeit a bit blinkered!

1) The WWE finally getting rid of Jeff Hardy.
I know with this business you never what will happen one day from the next, but I truly hope we have seen the last of this guy. I seriously do not know why the WWE tolerated him for as long as they did, or why fans worshipped him like they did. To me he was nothing more than 'self destruct overload in motion'. Some risks are just not worth it.

2) Seeing Ricky Steamboat back, even if only briefly, and still being in amazing shape. I had so much respect for Steamboat growing up and miss him so much on TV. Most times you groan when retired wrestlers come back 'to play' and wish you could just remember the good old days. With Steamboat though it was an absolute pleasure to see he could still hold his own and perform moves from the top rope etc. At no point did it seem he was trying to put himself over, just pure class to the end. So much respect for this guy.

3) This is a biased choice but it has to be mentioned! On the 26th July Jonny Storm took on the 'Tomcat' Kevin O'Neil in a 'Hair vs Title' match in Future Championship Wrestling, the hair belonging

to Kevin O'Neil and the title to Jonny Storm. Hand over heart I truly had no idea who was winning this match. For those not in the know, I happen to be Mrs O'Neil, but he had refused to let me know anything about this match. I also, for the record, happen to be very fond of his long hair! So throughout the show I was receiving conflicting whispers on who was winning/losing etc and probably drank the bar dry with nerves. Yet this was probably one of the most energetic and enthralling matches of the year that I have honestly seen. There was literally a near riot at the end of the night after Kevin O'Neil won via a little cheating, I seriously worried for his safety getting out of the ring! Not only that, this match saw the first use by Jonny Storm of the 'Mad Eli' slam! One match I will NEVER forget.

The Cynic

Delve into the past you say? Wallow in memories you say? Nah, I'll live in the present, thanks. Can't afford to look back too far, there's Prime Ministers Questions to brief for, the Chilcott enquiry to answer, pre budget report to whisper about in corners. So here's something I dashed off during a debate on bungee rope torsion regulation.
Here they are, in order but with no particular care.

3. CM Punk Succeeds In The Land Of The Giants: OK, it's by default because the WWE needed fresh meat at the top of the card, but it's still amazing. Punk's tiny, you see. Not Jimmy Krankie tiny, but positively stunted in Vinnie's world.
So he had to get by on his talent. Mainly his stick work. He became an annoying heel by playing on stuff that is traditionally a no-no for the Fed - drugs. Attacking Jeff Hardy for his patchy past was a piece of wonder and akin to a Damascene moment - wrestlers are people, not superheroes, admit it!
And so Punk's in-ring work (never too shabby anyway) was tolerated because he was a heel for the ages. His work was clever, reverse psychology stuff, just right for our jaded palates.
So celebrate a grappler we can identify with, and when Vinnie signs up the next lumbering 7ft oaf, just point out the Little Wrestler Who Could.

2. Nigel McGuiness Calls Jeremy Borash A Wanker On Impact: Yes, you heard it right. He did utter that word. And he came back into shot to spit it out. As fun as hearing that word applied to whey-faced Borash was - and those buzzkillers who pompously said "well, Americans don't know that word" don't change anything - it shows how edgy Nige is and how little his character is positioned in a commercial remit. This should be good.
But more than that; McGuiness/Wolfe might actually work. Pitched into a feud with Angle, who is clearly helping him to get over, this is a man who can deliver the goods in the ring and has the confidence of two Piers Morgans.
He's enjoying himself and producing high points in a generally improving Impact. Of course, I'm not stupid enough to miss the fact that the bookers and writers can bury him and there's nothing that even the best performer in the world can do about it. Next month, they might start a series of vignettes in a graveyard with a full moon and a naked Nigel howling, then emerging in fur and wolf head, but until then, celebrate him.
Nick "BrutusMagnusBigO" Aldis has opened this door, but not wide. His better than average skills were waiting for someone with superior talent to blow it off it's hinges.
McGuiness could be one for the ages, a wrestler good enough to be in the roster on his own merits, not just as a token.
Now all we need is Sheamus to carry the WWE belt with pride. Don't hold your breath.

1. The Cynic Begins To Write For TWP: You live in a kind of Utopia, a demi delight, a Nirvana of milk and honey. Well, one day a month at least. The day that TWP is printed. Because the ed secured my services when I'd turned my back on writing, when I'd replaced the inbox with the ballot box, when Downing Street superceded the information superhighway. He courted me for months, passing a series of tests I devised (the Berlusconi thing was nothing to do with him, I swear) but I'm still awaiting the ocelot fur-lined nipple clamps. How he swung that Obama Nobel peace prize thing, I'll never know.
But now I'm here. Worry no longer. I'll give you stuff to talk about at work or down the hostel on Monday morning. I'll introduce you to new words, ideas and fine wines. All for free. It's akin to community service. So wallow in it, bozos. Drink it in. Bathe in the glory of my shining wit and wise words. Celebrate me. Like Dunstable does on 15th October every year. And be happy. Of course, it's not a law. But it soon could be.

John Milner

1. Mickey Rourke wins a Golden Globe for his performances in The Wrestler.
He may have lost the Oscar, but on one night in January, a wrestler (or at least an actor portraying a wrestler) was the toast of Hollywood! The Wrestler didn't deliver a feel-good movie for wrestling the way Rocky did for boxing or The Natural did for baseball. The Wrestler showed the business as it really is. Sometimes it eats its young, sometimes its where people feel the most at home. Rather than candy-coat it, the way No Holds Barred did in 1989, the Wrestler showed pro wrestling, warts and all. Somewhere along the way, Hollywood decided to take a second look and enjoyed the truth that was being told on screen, at least enough for Mickey Rourke to earn a Golden Globe for his performance.

2. Hulk Hogan Joins TNA
Notice this isn't The Three Best Moments of 2009. No matter what else you want to say, Hogan's signing with TNA remains one of the biggest stories in the industry. Do I think Hogan's signing with TNA was a good thing for TNA or the business in general? About as good as it was for Hogan to sign with WCW in 1994. I would hope I'm wrong, but I'm guessing TNA is about to turn into the Hulk Hogan Show, with a few segments left over for whatever buddies ride in on his coat-tails and in five years, it will be the NWO redux where we're either watching Hogan and his buddies talk or we're listening to the commentators talk about what Hogan just said. Meanwhile, the buzz is that the WWE doesn't care about Hogan signing with TNA nor do they care TNA will go head to head with Raw on January 4th. So it's not like in 1997/1998, where the WWE felt threatened from WCW Nitro's rating and felt obligated to improve their product.

3. The Introduction of ROH DVDs to my wrestling collection.
While not an earth-shattering event to the business as a whole, this was definitely one of my top wrestling-memories of the year.
I'm not a tape-trader (heck, I've never even bid on anything on E-Bay) and so, I'd never had much exposure to Ring of Honor, save watching a couple of episodes during The Fight Network's free preview back in the winter of 2007. But over the last couple of years, since the organisation's inception, I'd read some very positive things about the organisation online, and so I was definitely interested.
Imagine my surprise when I was walking through Zellers, of all places, and found a couple of their DVD titles: Best in the World and Greatest Rivalries. The more I watched these two DVDS, the more impressed I became with Ring of Honor. To me, ROH is a combination of the best of the original ECW and what TNA's X-Division could have become. The Steel Cage Match between BJ Whitmer and Jimmy Jacobs was definitely a highlight. Every so often, I go back to that Zellers to see if they've got any more ROH DVDs, but so far, no luck.

Steve Ashfield

My top moment of the year has nothing to do with watching professional wrestling but talking about it. Earlier this year I put together an online magazine called 'The Golden Days' (it's online at www.piledriver-online.co.uk) looking at the history of pro wrestling. One of the interviews I carried out was with a Canadian wrestler called Butts Giraud who wrestled in the UK in the 1970s as an American heel. With technological nightmares ever present Butts ended up calling a phone box down the bottom of the road where I live. It was light when I started the phone call and dark when I ended it. We spent just over an hour and a half chatting about his career, how wrestling has changed, what it's like being an overseas wrestler in a foreign country, oh and also about cooking salmon. It was like listening to an audio book and totally fascinating.

Great moment of the year number two was when I found out the results from the WWE PPV 'Tables, Ladders and Chairs.' It's great news for European wrestling that finally WWE are putting major titles around the waist of people like Drew McIntyre and Sheamus. I well remember seeing the pair feud in RQW a few years ago, not in my wildest imagination would I have predicted that they'd end up being the WWE Intercontinental Champion and the WWE Champion.

My final highlight of the year was discovering the comic strip 'Rival Angels.' (www.rivalangels.com). Three times a week I follow the adventures of Sabrina Mancini and even though it's only a comic strip, it's more exciting than the WWE Diva's division.

Titan Publishing To Launch WWE Comics

WWE Comics will be launched next year in a partnership between WWE and Titan Publishing. 20 issues will be produced with the flagship title being 'WWE Heroes' featuring WWE Superstars and Divas, with the first issue debuting on March 23, 2010.

The series will take the biggest WWE Superstars and Divas beyond the spotlight of the squared circle and into a brand new fictional universe.

"Each week more than 1.6 million teens watch WWE programming on television in the U.S. This is an important demographic for the comic book industry and vital for a successful launch in the industry," stated Ned Hartley, Editor, WWE Heroes. "We've got some truly amazing stories to tell - our first issue is going to blow you away! The "in-your-face, no-holds-barred" attitude of the WWE works so well as a comic, we just can't wait for people to see the great surprises that we've got in store."

The WWE Heroes cycle is written by Keith Champagne, who has penned acclaimed comics such as Justice Society of America, Green Lantern Corps, World War III and Adolescent Radioactive Black Belt Hamsters.

Issue #1 reveals an eternal rivalry set against the backdrop of the history of WWE. Why is the ruthless Shadow King so obsessed with WWE? What is the reason for his eternal and supernatural war with the Firstborn? And could his ancient opponent really be a member of the WWE roster?

Artwork is provided by comics' artist, Andy Smith, who has worked as a penciller for major comic publishers such as Marvel, DC, Image, Acclaim, and CrossGen Entertainment. An alternate cover exclusive to comic stores of issue #1 features a specially-commissioned cover by comics' artist Liam Sharp, who has worked on titles including Hulk, X-Men, Spider Man, Venom, Gears of War, Superman, Batman, and Spawn: The Dark Ages.

For more information on WWE Heroes comic, visit: **www.wwecomics.com**

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AROUND THE HALLS

| By STEVE ASHFIELD (News Editor) - mageditoruk@googlemail.com |

British News

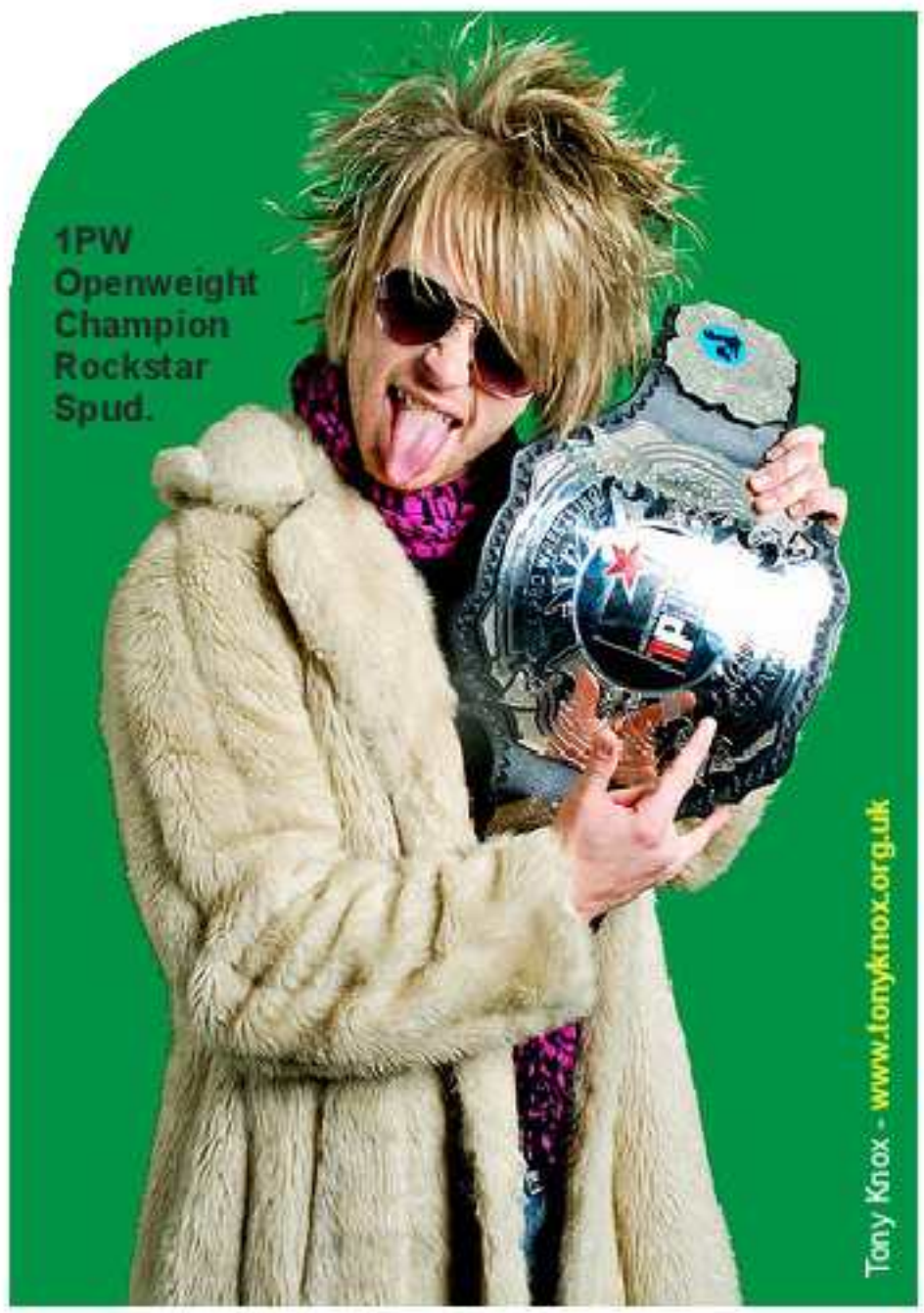
Looking for a show to go to on Christmas Eve? Well, Best of British Wrestling are the answer with 'Christmas Chaos' at Pontins in Camber Sands.

No show on Christmas Day but on Boxing Day they're back in action with a show at Pontins in Brean Sands followed by more Pontins shows at Prestatyn Sands (27th), Southport (30th) and back at Brean Sands on New Years Eve followed by a show at Camber Sands on January 1st.

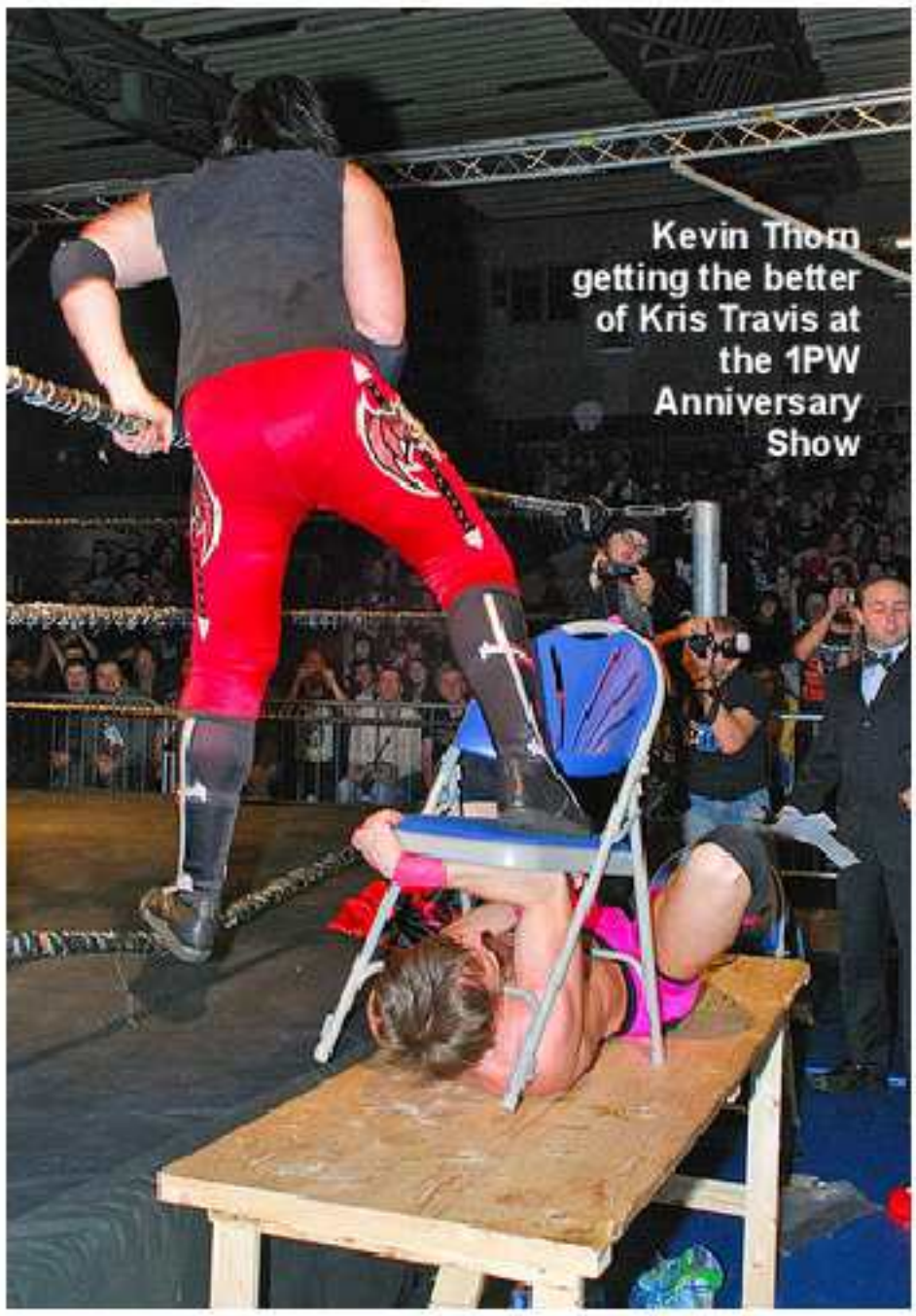
The company will also be presenting shows at Pontins, Vale Holiday Parks in South Wales and at John Fowler Holiday Parks next year. The company have been building a strong roster and have just signed James Dahmer

At the 1PW Fourth Anniversary Show held at the Doncaster Dome on November 15th, Martin Stone beat Sterling James Keenan and Steve Corino to retain his 1PW World Heavyweight title when Steve Lynskey called a tapout on Corino, while special referee Greg Burridge was distracted by events outside the ring.

Rob Van Dam beat Davey Richards to retain his WSW World title, Rockstar Spud won the vacant Openweight title in a '1PW Annihilator' match, Fight Club won the



1PW Openweight Champion Rockstar Spud.



Kevin Thorn getting the better of Kris Travis at the 1PW Anniversary Show

tag titles from Project Ego, Kevin Thorne defeated Kris Travis, Stixx beat Jonny Storm and The Prophets of Liberty beat Iceman and Ruffneck with help from new member Leroy Kincaide. Lionheart beat Jimmy Jacobs to win himself a match with Adam Curtis. Before the match could start Curtis revealed he'd sold his share of 1PW to Alex Shane who then attacked Lionheart allowing Curtis to get an easy win. After the match Lionheart was attacked again, this time by Stixx.

The afternoon of the 4th Anniversary Show saw Pro Wrestling101 hold 'A Perfect Twist of Fate' at the Doncaster Dome.

Martin Kirby beat Steve Corino, Negras Ligero defeated Robbie X, Terry Frazier defeated Joey Hayes after which Hayes turned face but was then brought out two guys dressed as Team SHAG leading to Greg Burridge to come to the ring and attack all three. Martin Stone defeated Wade Fitzgerald, Keith Myatt and Sykes went to a double KO in a Last Man Standing match, Davey Richards defeated Lionheart and Kris Travis beat Sabian, Kid Fite, Jonny Storm, Jimmy Havoc, CJ Banks and Liam Thompson in a 'No Gravity Required' match.

'101: Live' has been confirmed for the Hubs at the Sheffield Hallam University on February 14th and I doubt many of the wrestlers will have Valentines Day on their minds. Greg Burridge makes his UK return as he faces Joey Hayes, Lionheart is up against Martin Stone, El Negras Ligero (the dark side of El Ligero) is up against Martin Kirby and also due to appear are Kris Travis, Keith Myatt, Sykes, Terry Frazier, Fight Club, Jimmy Havok and Mo Montana. The show starts at 5pm and ticket are on sale at www.prowrestling101.co.uk and www.seetickets.com

'Unstoppable' is Pro Wrestling 101's first supershow and takes place at the Sheffield Octagon on March 20th. Ken 'Mr Kennedy' Anderson, The Brian Kendrick and Necro Butcher have been confirmed for the show. Also confirmed is a 101 Championship Rush Match to crown the first ever 101 Champion, Davey Richards has a rematch with Lionheart but this time over the best of three falls plus Martin Stone takes on Steve Corino in a Grudge match. Also due to appear are Greg Burridge, Martin Kirby, Kris Travis and El Negras Ligero. The show starts at 6.30pm and before that there's a Meet and Greet and Q&A session running from 2pm to 4.30pm.

The Unstoppable Pre Show Party takes place on Friday March 19th, at the Octagon. It costs £7. The company have announced a deal with the three star Park Inn in Sheffield with some great reductions on room prices if you tell them you'll be going to the Pro Wrestling 101 show. More information on **0114 220 4000**

Shooting Star Wrestling make their return with 'New Resolutions' at the Picturedrome in Holmfirth (six miles from Huddersfield) on February 5th.

Paul Malen takes on Stixx in a UEWA European Heavyweight title first round match. The winner qualifies for the one-night tournament in Germany next April. Also confirmed is Martin Kirby Vs. Cameron Kraze in a Loser Wears a Dress match.The show starts at 7.30pm, more info at www.shootingstarwrestling.com, tickets can be booked on **0113 815 0810** and by emailing tickets@shootingstarwrestling.com

AMP Wrestling are in action on January 9th with a show at the Hagard Community Centre in Willenhall, Coventry.

Confirmed so far are Edgar Stryfe Vs, Helix, The Dunne Brothers take on BMW, it's Jimmy Havoc Vs. Terry Seddon

The following day there's a Triple X show at the Jolly Beggar Club in Coventry starting at 6pm with Adam Shame defending his title against Edgar Stryfe, Jimmy Havoc faces Damien O'Conor and it's Zack Sabre Jr. v

Christmas Competition

The Wrestling Press has teamed up with Europe's #1 wrestling promotion to offer our readers the chance to win a fantastic prize this Christmas.

Q. Who is All Star's MC?

Send your answer to ed@thewrestlingpress.com

Three winners will be picked at random and each will have the option to collect either one family ticket for three All Star Wrestling shows or two backstage passes for any future All Star Wrestling events.

www.bigtimewrestlinguk.com

Closing date: 25th January 2010

All Star Wrestling

EUROPE'S #1 NAME IN SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT

Scott Renwick. Tickets cost £7 but you can buy tickets for both the AMP and Triple X shows for just £10,

AMP Entertainment will be holding their first ever weekend training camp on January 9th and 10th at the Hagard Community Centre in Willenhall, Coventry. Coaches are TXW Champion Adam Shame and Zack Sabre Jr. with other AMP and TXW wrestlers also due to be on hand. Sessions run from 11am to 5pm and it's £30 per day or £50 for the weekend and that also gives you free admission to the AMP and TXW shows being held that weekend. Coaching is also available for those who want to be in the business but not as a wrestler available at a discounted rate.

Futureshock held a charity show at the Swinton Masonic Hall on December 6th.

Danny Sensation won a 20-man Battle Royal to earn himself a shot at the FSW title currently held by Alex Shane, Jack Toxic beat DDL and the team of Vitamin C, Danny Sensation and Raynaldo beat Stixx, Dave Breaks, Caleb Hughes and LJ Herron.

Bubbelgum v Simmons at FWA Hotwired

Martin Stone will face Andy Simmonz in the final of the FWA World Title tournament.

The semi-finals took place at 'Hotwired' held at Sports City in Nottingham on November 29th with Stone beating Johnny Moss and Simmonz defeating Bubblegum in a match refereed by Robbie Brookside. Also on the card, El Ligero beat Derice Coffie in an FWA Flyweight Title Round-Robin Qualifier, Jonny Storm and Marty Scurll beat 'Rockstar' Spud and CJ Banks, Project Ego won a four-way tag match, Zack Sabre Jr. beat Joey Hayes and the team of Joel Redman and Sykes beat The Kartel.

Chuck Palumbo won the HEW title when he beat Brett Meadows at Towerlands in Braintree on November 13th but Meadows regained the title two days later.

Also on that Braintree card Martin Stone beat Scott Fusion and Britani Knight beat Sweet Saraya and Faith Lehaine to retain her Women's title.

HEW held 'A Controversial Christmas' at the Takeley Silver Jubilee Hall on December 19th and Sam Knee beat Sweet Saraya meaning she now has to leave the company. Knee won a short match via a clean pinfall. Also on the card Britani Knight beat Jetta to add her opponents RQW Women's title to her own HEW title. Brett Meadows kept his HEW title after he beat Zak Zodiac who was counted out after brawling with Judas and Danny Blaze got a DQ win over Ricky Knight while Chuck Cyrus beat Ben Bailey in the 'Chance in a Lifetime' tournament. The next show at the venue is on January 23rd.

Lionheart is still PBW Heavyweight Champion after he won his rematch against Martin Stone.

That win also sees him qualify for the one-night eight-man UEWA European Heavyweight title tournament that takes place in Germany next April. High Energy held onto their tag belts with a win over Project Ego. Other highlights included Liam Thompson beating Darkside and BT Gunn, Wolfgang beat Red Lightning, Sean South defeated Johnny Moss and the team of Rage N Storm beat El Ligero and Chris Rampage.

SWF were in action in Gosport on November 13th and it proved to be a good night for Jonny Storm as he not only beat Marty Scurll but also won the Rumble.

Also on the card Mark Sloan beat Wade Fitzgerald, Karl Atlas beat Kris Kay and The Credit Cruncher (I knew someone would use that name sooner or later) and The Masked Ninja lost by DQ to Mal Sanders and Eammon O'Neill. The next show is on January 30th at the Filton Community Centre in Bristol with Peter Collins and Romper Stomper taking on Kris Kay and James Baker, Gilligan Gordon faces Dan Walsh, it's Joel Redman vs. Nick Riley and PJ Jones v Karl Atlas. Their new website is at www.solentfederation.com

Showcase Wrestling is due to launch next year and will feature some of "the best unseen talent from around Britain and the world" alongside established stars with Al Snow confirmed to appear at their first show in April 2010.

Three initial shows are planned, one each in Scotland, England and Wales followed by a Showcase Supershow at the end of the year. Entitled 'The

Future', each show will feature four unseen matches from wrestlers looking to break into the industry followed by three matches featuring established stars. There'll also be a training seminar held before each show. The first show is in Manchester on April 17th at a venue yet to be confirmed with El Ligero confirmed. In July there's a show in Cardiff and the Scottish show will take place in October. For more information email showcasewrestling@hotmail.co.uk

DPW were in action at the Ackroyd Street Working Men's Club on December 5th.

Cameron Kraze and Bingo Ballance beat DPW British Champion CJ Banks and Rainz. Martin Kirby earned himself a shot at the Mansonweight title with a DQ win over Voodoo, El Ligero beat Steve Sykes and Kris Travis defeated Scotty Hexx.

Next up is the Second Anniversary show on March 13th at the Morley Town Hall in Leeds. CJ Banks defends his DPW British title against Cameron Kraze, Kris Travis faces Rainz in a No Holds Barred match and if he wins gets a one-on-one match with GM Christopher Brammer and Sykes has challenged El Ligero to a tag contest with partners of their own choice. Doug Basham makes his return to DPW, Mad Man Manson defends his Mansonweight title against Martin Kirby who will retire the belt if he's victorious, however if he doesn't win then Kirby has to form a permanent tag team with Manson. Tickets can be reserved on **07745 768 920**, more info at www.leedswrestling.co.uk

There's a training seminar run by Steve Sykes on the afternoon of the show running from 2pm to 5pm costing £10.

BCW held 'No Blood, No Sympathy VII' at the Kilmarnock Grand Hall on December 5th.

Former WWE star Paul London beat BT Gunn, Darkside beat Liam Thompson, Falcon defeated Zack Sabre Jr,. Johnny Moss got a win over El Ligero and the team of Red Lightning and Wolfgang beat The Models.

PPW made their debut at the Wulfrun Hall in Wolverhampton on December 14th.

Raven beat Jonny Storm in a Ravens Rules match, The Leaders of The New School won a three-way match against Hubba Bubba Lucha and the team of Lee Hunter and Jetta when Marty Scurll pinned El Ligero who had been accidentally kicked by his tag partner Bubblegum. After the match Bubblegum hit Ligero with a crutch belonging to Jim Hunter. Lucien L. Jones beat TJ Rage and Andy Wyld, Jay Icon beat Jules Lambrini, Kev O'Neil got the win over Kid Fite in a best of three falls match to seal a match with Johnny Saint and debutant Evan Sarven beat Zandrack Von Elllering III.

The tournament to crown the first ever PPW Champion will continue over the next six months. The company also plan to hold King of the Deathmatch style and Junior Heavyweight tournaments next year with Raven also scheduled to make his return.

IPW:UK were at the Tap 'N Tin in Chatham on November 19th.

Jonny Storm beat Marty Scurll, T-Bone beat Kurrupt, Mark Haskins defeated Sabian, Jimmy Jacobs beat Martin Stone, Jon Ryan beat Jimmy Havoc and Zack Sabre Jr. beat Lightening Kid.

On December 12th it was 'Christmas Cracker 2009' at the White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley.

Leroy Kincaide retained his IPW:UK Undisputed title after going to a no-contest with Ricky Hype. The match failed to start after Kincaide injured his shoulder after being attacked by Joel Redman. As a result it was decided that if Hype wanted another title shot he'd have to win the 24-man Christmas Rumble which he did setting up a match for the belt on the next Swanley show. The Rumble included the return of former IPW:UK Champion JC Thunder.

Also on the card, Jonny Storm beat Joel Redman, Snare defeated Jimmy Havoc in a No DQ All Weapons Legal match, The Bhangra Knights beat The Daredevils after interference by RJ Singh who then lost a match against Marty Scurll. After that singles match The Bhangra Knights attacked Scurll before the Daredevils made the save setting up a six-man tag match for March 6th.

IPW:UK start 2010 with a return to the Tap 'n' Tin on the 18th, the Petersfield Festival Hall on the 19th and on February 20th at the Arun Leisure Centre in Bognor Regis with The Lion Kid due to defend his Cruiserweight title.

'No Escape 2010' takes place at the Swallows Leisure Centre in Sittingbourne on February 21st. Martin Stone take on Danny Garnell, Leroy Kincaide will be defending his IPW:UK Undisputed British title possibly against Johnny Moss and The Leaders of The New School will put their tag titles on the line most likely against Hubba Bubba Lucha. The show starts at 5.30pm, more info at www.ipwuk.com

It's going to get confusing in XWA in the New Year because by the end of 'Goldrush' on January 30th at the Morecambe Dome, The Championship Chase final takes place as Stixx faces Joey Hayes with the winner getting a shot at the XWA British Heavyweight title.

However another number one contender will be created when the 15-man Goldrush match takes place. Johnny Phere has been confirmed for that match. Tom Lambert finally makes his debut when he takes on RJ Singh and there's also a Flyweight title contenders match featuring El Ligero, 'CJ Banks, Marty Scurll and Tiger Bailey. Johnny Phere has been confirmed for the Goldrush and can be heard talking about his hopes for 2010 at www.youtube.com/marvmarv100

The show starts at 7.30pm and tickets can be booked on **01524 582803**, Morecambe and Lancaster Tourist Information Centres, www.xwawrestling.com and www.ticketweb.co.uk

The next show in Sudbury is on February 27th with Sam Slam, Jonny Storm, Pitbull Bulk, Marty Scurll and Baz Attitude so far confirmed.

The BAWA title changed hands when Oldskool beat Stu Odyssey in a chain match.

In Lord of the Ring qualifiers, The Saint beat Cannoe Tango and Chris Walker won the BAWA Rumble. Zack Sabre Jr. beat Walton Casual in a submission match. Larry La Rue beat Chris Walker in a Street Fight, Team Cash beat Team Efficient with Cash Calloway the sole survivor, 'The Lord of the Ring' tournament takes place on at the North Oxfordshire Academy in Banbury with the winner becoming number one challenger and getting a shot at the BAWA title at 'Mind Games' on April 25th. Also on the show Oldskool defends his BAWA title in a rematch with Stu Odyssey. The show starts at 6.30pm.

On the 5th of December in Midhurst, The UK Kid won the EWF Shield tournament and Will Armstrong beat 'Iron Hulk' Karl Atlas to retain his All Counties title in a Last Man Standing match.

Iain Logan is still EWF Champion after defeating Dave Crespin.

WAR held 'The Fight Before Christmas' in Rugby on December 5th and Roselyn became the new WAR Champion when she pinned Iggy Taylor.

Taylor had already beaten defending champion Dante and John Dunn in the Gauntlet match. The new number one contender is Brandon Thomas after he won a 13-man Battle Royal. New tag champs were crowned when The Thunderbirds beat Team Awesome in a TLC match. The next show is 'Battle Lines' on February 6th at the Lawrence Sheriff School in Rugby with Jetta confirmed to appear. More info at www.waruk.co.uk

Premier Promotions return to the Assembly Halls in Worthing on December 30th for their annual Christmas Spectacular.

Tickets can be booked at www.worthingtheatres.co.uk and on **01903 206 206**.

The next Superstars of Wrestling show is set for the GL1 Gloucester Leisure Centre on January 30th.

Skull Murphy takes on Danny Collins in the main event in a no referee hardcore match, Robbie Brookside defends his Heavyweight title against Drew McDonald, Johnny Saint faces Matt Jarrett, it's Mal Sanders against James Mason and Johnny Kidd takes on Johnny Rose. The show starts at 7.30pm and tickets can be booked on **1452 396 699** and from the venue.

PTW held 'First Time, Last Time, Only Time' at the Challney School for Girls in Luton on November 28th.

The long heralded match between Petey Staniforth and arch rival Dan Edge ended with Staniforth getting the win after simply poking Edge in the chest with his finger and it was revealed they hadn't been feuding after all. Methinks Mr Staniforth watches too many Vince Russo tapes.

Other highlights on the card saw James Mason beat Johnny Kidd 2-1 in a best of three falls match, G 'The Lap Dancing Superstar' beat Marcus Phayer to retain his PTW British title, D-Mon beat Gino Perri and El Pura Puente to keep his Cruiserweight belt but new World tag team champions were crowned as Nemesis beat Mason Storm and Del Rico to win the vacant titles but were attacked after the match by the Stevens Brothers. More info at www.powertripwrestling.co.uk

ACW held 'Collision '09" at the Dunstable Leisure Centre on November 21st and the Heavyweight title changed hands when Samson beat Shane Summers.

The Light Heavyweight division also has a new champion after Mr. E. won the title in a six-man Handcuff match. Matt Midas and Darkstar are still tag champions despite a DQ loss to Sam Steel and DOA. ACW have now rebranded themselves as Total Action Wrestling and they're at the Hitchin Town Hall on January 22nd with a Rumble match to determine the first ever TAW World Champion. Confirmed to appear are Samson, Sam Steel, Shane Summers, Brad Ford, Rich N' Famous, Mark Exley, The Rainbow Kid, Blue Lightning, Mr E and more to be announced. More info at www.totalactionwrestling.com

North East Showcase held a card at the Union Jack Social Club in Throckley on December 18th.

Pauly C beat GTS in a No DQ match, Santa 'Mojo' Clause defeated Adam Christ, Harrison Brand beat

Martin Kirby, the team of El Ligero and KATSU beat Brett Eagle and Robbie Ryder and in a CRW Showcase match The Minto Brothers beat The Saint and Caden.

There's a weekend training camp with The British Invasion (Williams/Magnus) at the SLAM Wrestling School at the Sport Nottingham Leisure Complex on February 20th and 21st (midday to 5pm each day).

This costs £100, more info at www.gladiator-oblivion.com or email gladiator-oblivion@hotmail.co.uk

UKW held 'Saturday Night Mayhem: Episode 4 – Retribution' on November 20th and qualifiers were held for a Dream Ticket match due to take place at 'Christmas Bash', with the winner getting an anytime anywhere shot at the UKW title.

RJM beat Bruce Shelia, Desi Dario Crane defeated Reece Jordan but after the match both were attacked by Hades and Mark Sanders beat Adam Danzig. New tag champs were crowned when Dylan Roberts and Danny Steel beat Dynamite Chris Hart to win the belts but Scotty Phantom is still UKW Champion after beating Matt Vaughn.

Also on the card Chrissy V beat Faith Lehaine by DQ and Jetta beat The Swedish Tigress to qualify for the UKW Women's title tournament.

The next Live American Wrestling show is on March 19th at the Bromsgrove Members Club starting at 7,30pm with tickets costing £5.

The main event sees Lord Graham Thomas and 'Iron Man' Mike Roberts (who replaces the injured Nik Dutt) defending their tag titles against The UK Freebirds (Jonny Rose and Mad Dog Maxx). 'Love Muscle' Russell defends his LAW Heavyweight title against Johnny Blaze and 'Dazzlin' Danny Valentine, The Gangster, Scorpion and TK take part in the AIWF European title tournament. Also confirmed is 'Cyanide' Camron Steel v Scott Reed. Former WWE star Bushwhacker Luke is due over in February.

The first 4FW show of the year is 'New Years Wrestleution' on January 30th at the Grange Drive Leisure Centre in Swindon with Jack Dynamo defending his 4FW Heavyweight title against number one contender Eddie Reyes in a Lumberjack match.

Former champion JD Knight will face a 4FW Academy Student and the British Junior Heavyweight division will be launched with Dave Sharp getting a chance to become the first champion. Also due to appear are Alex Shane and Joel Redman and the show starts at 7pm, more information at www.4fw-online.co.uk

At the Billingham Synthonia on November 20th the 3CW tag titles changed hands when Chris Whitton and Kid Richie beat Project Ego, Prince Mohmed Ameen and Cameron Kraze beat 3CW Champion El Ligero and Darkside and Liam Thompson beat Ross Strong.

The Tournament of Faith was held at the Hedworth Hall in South Shields on November 13th with the winner becoming the new IWF Champion.

Final qualifiers saw Lewis Beardsley beat RD Wood, Tim Le Strange defeat Jimmy Blade, Assassin beat Harrison Brand and Adam Christ beat Robbie Ryder. The final was a four-way match and it was Adam Christ who came out on top to regain the title he lost earlier this year. Also on the card PAC beat Harry Pain and the team of KATSU and Mike Redback beat Brett Eagle and Max Heat.

Full results can be seen at www.sensationaliwf.piczo.com but the big winner of the night was MC Pauly C who won three awards including the wrestler of the year in a poll chosen by members of the IWF roster. The fans also had a vote for wrestler of the year and their award was won by Robbie Ryder. Match of the year was the bout between Harry Pain, Lewis 'The Dragon' Beardsley, Robbie Ryder and RD Wood at the Ninth Anniversary show.

Mark Haskins is the new PLEX Wrestling British Champion after he beat Marcus Brash in Aldershot on December 6th.

Haskins replaced the injured Mal Sanders. Also on the card, James Mason beat Robbie Sincaide,

Mark Haskins © Gino Perri

James Mason
© Gino Perri

Darrell Allen won the Christmas Bash match to earn himself a shot at the British title, Jay Knox beat Bingo Balance, BFW became number one contenders to the tag belts with a win over The Board of Power and Fame and also due a tag title shot are Team PLEX who beat James Reid and Jay Knox. More info at www.plex-wrestling.tk.

Ravenhill Promotions were at the GGCA in Gilfach Goch on November 20th.

JD Knight beat Jack Dynamo, Big Dog beat Edmund 'The Poet' Ferris and later won the Rumble, Chris Recall got a win over Kade Callous and 'Flyin" Mike Bird beat Lightening Kid.

They'll become the first wrestling company to hold a show inside the walls of a historic castle when they hold a show at Harlech Castle in North Wales on May 1st 2010.

ASW were in Telford on November 13th.

Rampage Brown beat James Mason, Tony Spitfire beat Jimmy Jacobs and the Rumble was won by Goliath. At the Victoria Halls in Hanley on November 14th, Jimmy Jacobs beat Tony Spitfire, Phil Powers and Karl Krammer beat Goliath and James Mason and Deano won the Rumble.

Mikey Whiplash won the Rumble match held at the Southampton Guildhall on November 20th with Rampage Brown the last eliminated. Brown had earlier beaten Whiplash, strange Rumble with no eliminations until after all 18 wrestlers ended up in the ring.

Dean '2Xtreme' Allmark won the ASW Superslam Heavyweight title when he beat Rampage Brown.

Gladiator Goliath has made his last appearance for All-Star before leaving to take up a developmental contract with WWE. American Avalanche is back with the company and will be headlining the Christmas shows at Butlins in Bognor Regis, Skegness and Minehead.

The All Star Wrestling Training School is now at the Civic Centre in Bebington with training taking place between 10am and 4pm every Saturday with 'Xtreme' Dean Allmark as head trainer. For more info **call 07738-330316**

Kid Kash will be in the UK next March holding a series of seminars at Macs Gym in Manchester for Star Power Training.

The seminars will be five days in length with a minimum of six hours training per day. The beginners class takes place from March 1st to 5th, Intermediate class runs from March 8th to 12th and the Masterclass is from the 15th to 19th. Nearby accommodation can be provided by Star Power Training for only £99 for 4 nights. The courses cost £299 with insurance also required, to book your place call **07845 581 487** or email bookings@starpowertraining.com with a deposit of £49 required. More info at www.starpowertraining.com

GPW held their Crazy Cruiser 8 tournament on November 13th and at the Monaco Ballroom in Wigan on October 16th Bubblegum beat Max Damon, Joey Hayes got a win over Ricky J McKenzie, CJ Banks defeated Dylan Roberts and Martin Kirby beat Fox Carter.

The semi-finals saw wins for Banks over Kirby and Hayes over Bubblegum. Joey Hayes beat CJ Banks in the final to win the tournament. The next show is at the same venue on February 19th.

Joey Hayes on GPW Crazy Cruiser card

Riot Act Wrestling held 'Three Men Walked Into a Pub...Everyone Else Came Here' at the White Road Community Centre in Chatham on November 14th.

Ant E. Christ beat John Everyman to qualify for the 2010 RIOT League, The Vainity Express beat Jay Wyles in a handicap match, and Psycho Steve beat Danny Jonez in a Loser Wears a Dress match. Also confirmed for the 2010 league is Pyscho Steve.

Their next show is on January 16th at the White Road Community Centre in Chatham, more info about that at www.riotactwrestling.co.uk

RDW held their Anniversary Show at the Empress Ballrooms in Mexborough on November 21st.

The afternoon show saw Nathan Cruz beat Martin Kirby, Havoc defeat Reece Jordan, the team of Babylove (Stacey Baybie and Chelsey Love) beat The Keepers of the Catch and the Rumble was won by 'The Gambler' Rick Hardrock.

In results from the Anniversary show, Prince Mohmed Ameen beat Sam Slam to keep his British Heavyweight title, Havok beat Spyda, Pryde won the tag belts when they beat defending champions Iwan Kennedy and Nathan Cruz and Ricky Knight and Zak Zodiac, Havok won a four corners elimination match against Spyda, Danny V and Matt Myers to win the Regional title, El Ligero won the European title when he won a Gauntlet match that included Pryde, Havok and Prince Mohmed Ameen and Britani Knight won the Women's title when she teamed with Sweet Saraya to beat Babylove in an elimination match. Martin Kirby beat Joel Redman. Mick Romeo beat Gilligan Gordon by two falls to one and El Ligero got a DQ win over Rick Hardrock.

The next RDW show is again at the Empress Ballrooms in Mexborough on February 6th. The first match confirmed sees Ricky Knight and Sweet Saraya take on Martin Kirby and Stayce Baybie. Those confirmed to appear include El Ligero, Havok, Sykes, Prince Ameen, Britani Knight, Stixx and Chelsey Love.

RDW will be holding monthly weekend training camps at the Empress Ballrooms featuring three training sessions and a live academy event. On Saturday there are sessions from 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm and on Sunday a session from 11am to 2pm with the academy show at 3pm. Training costs £30 for the entire weekend or £10 per session, those attending the whole weekend will receive a free weekend gym pass.

The March session takes place on the 6th and 7th, the 10th and 11th in April, 1st and 2nd in May and 12th and 13th in June. More info is available by emailing Steve Cartwright at steve@realdealpromotions.co.uk or calling **07771 618 288**.

At the Hadley Stadium in Birmingham on November 14th Kevin O'Neill beat Jonny Storm in a No DQ match to keep his FCW title.

Swift Justice beat The Leaders of the New School, Brandon Thomas beat Joel Redman and the match between Alex Graves and Tom Mason ended in a no-contest after interference by Ilya Dragovic.

At the Aston University in Birmingham on November 20th Lucian L. Jones won the AWW title when he beat Spud.

Marty Scurll beat Dan Ryder, Jonny Storm got a win over Brandon Thomas, T-Bone beat Derice Coffie, Desirable Danny D defeated MK Mikinan after interference by Dave Williams and Dan Ryder and the elinination tag match was won by Carnage and Heratio.

On November 27th, Lucian L Jones beat Anarchy to retain his AWW title. Anarchy had earlier beaten Tenacious Lee. Also on the card Jonny Storm beat Marty Scurll, Lee Hunter beat Brandon Thomas, Carnage and Heratio beat Kristian Lees and X-Bonez and the team of Spud and Dave Williams beat Dan Ryder and MK Mikinan and after the match Ryder attacked his partner.

GERMANY

UEWA have confirmed that the one-night eight-man European Heavyweight Championship tournament will take place at the Schiitzenhalle in Buchholz, Germany on April 24th 2010.

Confirmed for the tournament are: Tank and Chaos from Danish Pro Wrestling, 'Bad Bones' John Kay and Jon Ryan from CWN in Germany, Kaio and Lupo from Italian Championship Wrestling, Lionheart and Martin Stone from PBW, Stixx and Paul Malen from Shooting Star Wrestling, 'Rebel' Damon Brix and 'Hellvetic Warrior' Jamie Gardner from WWPW, Rampage Brown from All Star Wrestling and Michael Kovac from RWA in Austria with two more wrestlers to be announced.

First round matches in the tournament have seen Damon Brix beat Jamie Gardner in August and Lionheart beat Martin Stone at 'Maximum Impact' on October 17th. Still to take place are John Kay v Jon Ryan, Lupo v Kaio Paul Malen v Stixx, Chaos v Tank, Rampage Brown against a wrestler to be confirmed and Michael Kovac vs. a wrestler yet to be confirmed.

More information at www.uewa.eu

PHOTOS WANTED

If you regularly attend and photograph these events please consider sending thumbnails to ed@thewrestlingpress.com for review and we may use them in future issues.

ALL STAR PERFORMANCE

PART TWO

INTERVIEW WITH ALL STAR MC MISS LETITIA ALLMARK

By PWPFROG - froggyllc@aol.com

Photos TONY KNOX - www.tonyknox.org.uk

CONTINUED FROM NOVEMBER

> As All Star takes their shows all across the country, would you say you have a favourite venue?

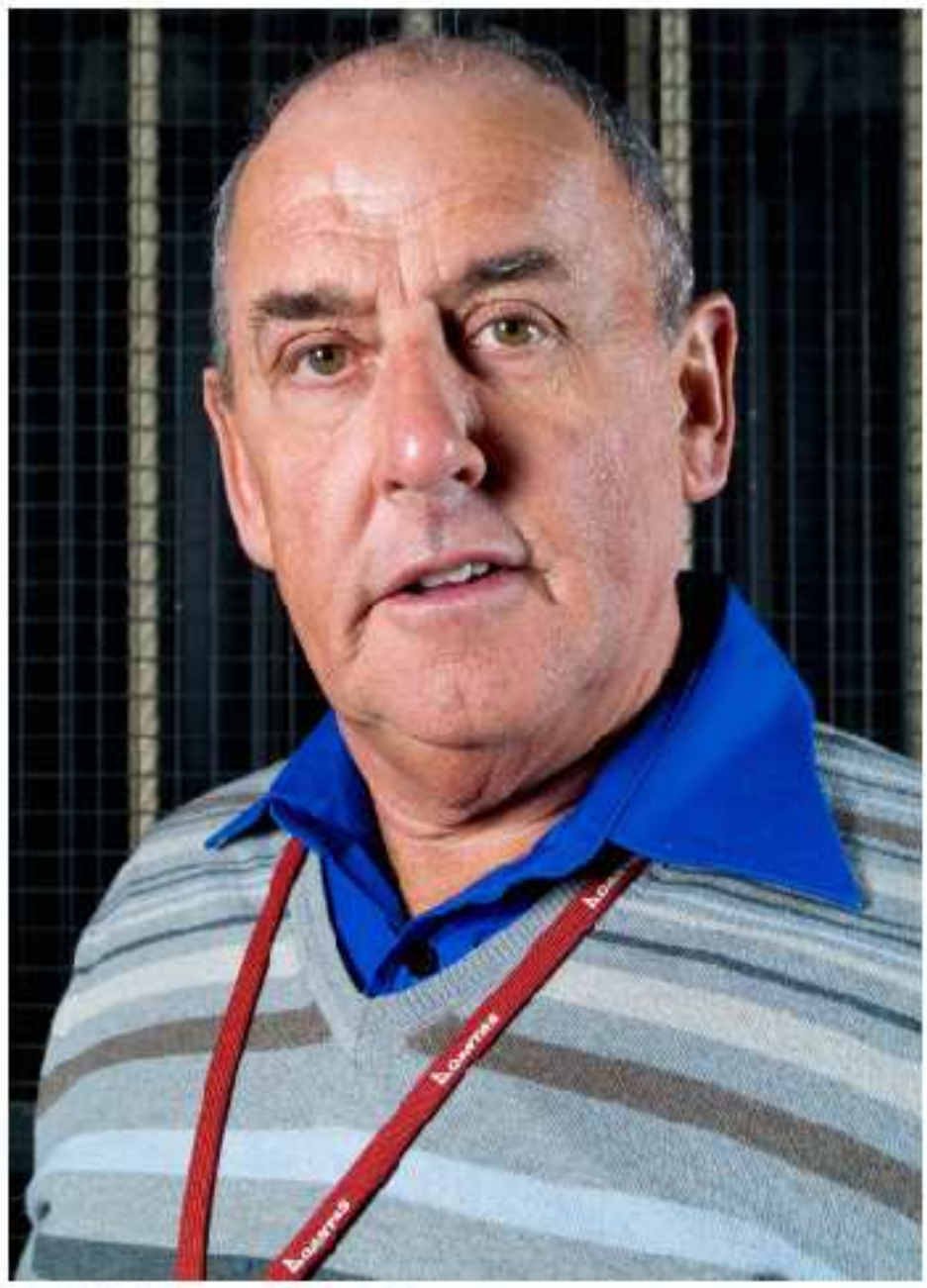
Yes, this venue here at Hanley is my favourite venue as it's a proper theatre with proper wrestling fans who know what they want, and it's always a good atmosphere. There are places that you prefer to go and work than other places, its dependant on crowd reception, ring and sound technicians, the technicians backstage, the general layout. Croydon and Bristol are always good venues again as the fans are regulars and are passionate about what they want to see. There is nothing better than being in a show place with a fantastic atmosphere around you for two hours, it gives you such a buzz. There is nothing better than driving home saying that was a great show, you're satisfied knowing that people enjoyed it and were entertained and have gone home happy, it's a really good feeling.

> Do you try and mingle with the fans at any point?

Absolutely, if it wasn't for them we wouldn't be doing any of this. We do the backstage passes so the kids get to go and meet the wrestlers, if anyone is waiting backstage we would all take the time to speak to them because it's a true fact if it wasn't for them we'd all be working at Tesco's! We love talking to the fans as well because of the stories that they have and their memories are unbelievable. I mean, I was walking around this place from when I was six years old selling raffle tickets for my dad to earn my pocket money. Some of those people that I used to sell raffle tickets to then are still coming now and they are still on the front row and that's just amazing, they're so dedicated. They've been here from the days of Rollerball Rocco and Tony St Clair and they are still coming back now, and they've seen all the changes and they still support it and they still go crazy on the front row. They are the people that it's all about.

We used to run shows at Liverpool Stadium and people would come up to the ring and be banging on the apron and the women would carry house bricks in their handbags.

I remember my father bringing in John Quinn who was the first American wrestler to be brought into



Letitia's father Brian Dixon.

England and I was in the Majorettes, I was only six, and my dad said with it being an American theme maybe myself and six other friends could lead him out to the ring. It was great, we were all in our uniforms. I think we had been walking twirling the batons for about two minutes before we had to be rescued from the crowd who seemed to be intent on attacking John Quinn because he was American. But they were the diehards, the old ladies with the handbags and throwing shoes, he was more likely to get injured getting to and out of the ring than he was in the ring. The Majorettes idea got abandoned very quickly! But I think my father got more of a feeling of the challenges between America and England. We do use that angle quite a lot now. You'll see the Americans starts to come in more over the next few weeks and there is nothing better than the crowd sitting there and cheering for their country. They are not just cheering for a wrestler, they are behind their country. With some of the diehard wrestling fans, we've had to escort wrestlers away, but it's only the fans passion, I love going to those places where the

fans get so involved. There is a guy here tonight who you're bound to see, he gets up to the ring, he'll bang on it shouting, but that's what it's all about.

From the days when I was growing up it was a lot more older people in the audience, now it's a lot more aimed at a family show, we always stress that's it's a two hour family show, no swearing, there are no hand gestures and so on. There is a man who comes who sits on the front row, I've seen his little boy grow from five years old, he's probably thirteen now, and that's great because they are setting his memories. His dad brings him to the wrestling every Saturday, and sometimes when I'm talking I'll refer to them because I just think this little boys memories are set for life, him and his dad watching the wrestling, that's his thing. I know that I'm involved with this, but even if I wasn't it would still be a buzz for me to sit and watch the show. I think if I wasn't passionate about it then it wouldn't work so much in my favour but because I am and I want it to go right it's really good.

> Do you ever wish you were just a fan and you didn't know who or what was going to happen on the show?

I don't think I've ever really been in the situation where I was just a fan. I was always Mitzi's and Brian's daughter, Giant Haystacks little girl that he put nappies on, so I've always been backstage. However there has been times when my dad has walked past and gone "oh my god" because I'll be screaming at Rollerball Rocco. I'd be speaking to him very politely at the back but then screaming and threatening him out front like everybody else! As I've got older I've used a bit more discretion. Years ago you'd still find me, even though I've never just been in the situation of just sitting in the audience as a fan, I'd still be there screaming like the rest of the fans. I presented Tony St Clair with the World Championship Belt when I was only twelve, that was probably one of the most nerve wracking nights of my life! But what a great privilege to be able to say I did something like that! These are just some of my memories of growing up and hopefully these will be the sort of memories ahead of Joseph growing up if that's what he chooses, unless he changes his mind about wrestling.

> I can't see that happening somehow!

True! He joins us at the wrestling school every Sunday even though he's only four and the minimum age is ten and he'll stand in the queue to do his rolls and his break falls and he can say all the names and I think "oh my gosh, you're only four!".

> I bet he was doing back bumps before he could walk!

Honestly he is so at home in the ring. He'd be up on that top rope if he was here now and my mother would be going "No! Get him down!" and panicking, but he is so happy in the ring. He'll be putting wristlocks on the guys, reversing and getting out, it's just amazing that he knows that at his age but frightening at the same time. If he's not actually wrestling with Dean or watching wrestling he's playing the wrestling figures that my dad sells, he's got them all. He's so involved with wrestling that when he started school I had to tell the teacher this is what he does, however I don't want him to be a bully but he does know quite a lot. But on reflection having spoken to his teacher he's not like that at all thank god and he's very shy in class. But I do want him to know how to protect himself, I think that's very important in this day and age, I don't ever want to him to be bullied. The teacher said to him on the second day, "So Joseph are you going to be a wrestler when you grow up?" and he looked at her and said to her all sincere "I am now."

I PRESENTED TONY ST CLAIR WITH THE WORLD BELT WHEN I WAS ONLY TWELVE!

He even has a name for himself. He was in the ring with Robbie Brookside who is a dear friend and Robbie said to him "Well Joseph if you are going to be a wrestler we need to think of a wrestling name for you," and with that Joseph did a big star jump and yelled "How about Jumping Joseph!" which absolutely cracked us up but he came up with that all by himself. We were signing him into school and they asked what his name was so he said Joseph and they said what's your second name and he said jumping! What chance do I have?!

> Now I love the story about how your mom and dad got together. Would you mind telling me about how you and Dean got together?

Obviously it was quite different to how my mom and dad met, as you know my dad was a referee in my

mom's match and he stood on her hair during the match. My mom is quite a fiery person unlike my dad who is totally mellow and calm, they are complete opposites. Dean and I were obviously friends first, it was one summer and for some reason I ended up in the big tour bus which was always freezing cold and very uncomfortable but for that summer that's how we travelled. Dean and I would just end up talking and then texting, we were just friends, nothing more, for three for four years before we even got together, it was a very gradual thing, not love at first sight. We're in an age gap relationship anyway so I never looked at Dean and thought, you know! I'd come out of my dressing room and he'd be sat on the floor outside my door doing his boots up and I'd be like what are you doing there? And then somebody said "oh my god he's been madly in love with you for years!" I was like "oh heck!" I didn't know, but we've been married for six years now and I absolutely love him to bits.

The day that he proposed which was seven years ago now, we were working in Skegness, and unbeknown to me he'd gone and asked my dad for my hand in marriage and he'd said "Well you have my blessing but don't be surprised if she says no as she's never wanted to get married." Which was true, I'd always made that perfectly clear. So we'd gone out for the night and it was New Years Eve and he was hyper all day but when we got there and he sat there really miserable, obviously the clock was ticking towards twelve o'clock, and his nerves were getting the better of him. I was thinking, god he's dead miserable tonight, I was so looking forward to this night out. Then just before twelve o'clock he took me outside and started talking about our relationship and then he got down one knee and I was like what are you doing, get up! And then I saw the ring. But when you know it's right you go for it. We've had a lot of obstacles to overcome just with the fact that when I first got involved with the wrestling I said one hundred percent I would never ever get involved with a wrestler. No disrespect to any of them but a wrestlers life is a little bit like a sailors if you get my meaning, and I've grown up with it and I've seen it and I thought that's definitely not for me, so I said to dad you've got no need to worry about me I would never dream of going near a wrestler, I know what they are all like, so when it came to crunch time to tell; him he already knew anyway! But dad knew Dean for the person he was and he was really happy for us both anyway. We had all these plans in operation for if my dad went mad and sacked us both, we were going to live in a caravan in Brighton, you know, love conquers all at the end of the day. Dean has admitted he was more nervous asking my dad's permission than he was asking me. I was quite a wreck, I was like "Oh my god we're going to have to go in and tell them!" but Dean was like, they know! I was shocked, I was like, "oh my god you've already told them?" And he was like, "no but I had to ask permission off your dad". I was so touched by that, it must have taken a lot of courage for him, it's not just my dad, it's his boss as well. But it was a brilliant day. When we came back in there was an old couple who worked at the door, it was this old cabaret club, and they were like, "Has he just proposed to you?" And I said "Yes" and they replied that they'd been watching on the security monitor. So my dad is always threatening to go and get a copy of the tape!

> Is there anyone in wrestling that you really look up to or is there anyone that you are really proud of how they've progressed?

Definitely Robbie Brookside. There is only about six or seven years age difference between us and when he started I was only a little girl and for some of the stunts that have been pulled on him, and for him to still be here today and be the person that he is. They say what doesn't break you only makes you stronger which is true with him. I think he is also such an inspiration for the young people coming in because he is so passionate about what he does and he's such a fantastic role model and such a solid person throughout my life. Definitely I have to say my dad because of his tireless work ethics and morals, I cannot leave him out. On a personal level all the morals and standards that have been instilled in me are because of my mom and dad.

It's difficult because there are people that do come and go and you may never see again, and those that do make an impression on you. Like Dave Finlay, I knew him from a little girl, he was married at the time to Princess Paula who was my mom's tag partner at the time. To see where he is today and when we go back to the WWE he always takes us backstage, and it's fantastic to see that he has progressed as much as he has and he's so respected in the world he is in now. The same with Steve Regal, just a Blackpool local lad and look where he is now. It's such an inspiration for our youngsters, it's like if you want it, this is what you can achieve.

> I know you also do a lot of charity work, how do you fit this in with everything else as well?!

I'm a glutton for punishment! I'm a bit of soft touch but it feels good to help. We get so much from everyone it's nice sometimes to give something back. I was approached by Derian House which is a children's hospice in Chorley about a year ago, and at that time they had some children there that were wrestling fans. The organiser emailed me and asked could I send anything such as wrestling programmes or such and I phoned her back the next day and said I can do better than that, we're going to hire a mini bus and bring some of the wrestlers down for the day. I asked a list of wrestlers if they'd be willing to join in, and I was basically asking the wrestlers to give up a day of their own personal time, and not one turned me down, and I'm talking both big names and small names. So we went there and I said to the lads you're going to have to go in character and bless them it was an absolutely freezing cold October day but they were all there posing in their trunks and boots. It was a truly unbelievable day. I saw real big hard men crying their eyes out when we'd been into the chapel, it just made you go home and hug your child and your loved ones. We went home and we were working in Cannock and I thought, that's just not enough, we've got to take it a step further. So I rung the lady back and said I want to put on a show for you and I want you to have everything. I'll make all the plans but I want all the proceeds to go to the children. And again it was quite a big event to organise as we got the Reebok Stadium in Manchester, which they gave us rent free as it was for a children's hospice, they gave us the lighting and music people, everything. I went to the wrestlers with names I wanted on the show and I ended up turning people down! Those who I turned down ended up coming anyway, it was such a fantastic night. I was hoping we were going to raise about three or four thousand pounds and we actually raised just over nine thousand and I was overjoyed. After that night I rung Derian House back and gave them all our free dates and said we're going to do this again. These guys need a lot of support, I mean, they only get Government funding for three weeks of a year, they have to find the rest of the money themselves. I was so nervous about getting this show so right for them because I was doing this for someone else and I wanted it to be absolutely perfect and it was a real honour to do. When they came in with the figure of what we'd raised, I just couldn't believe it. I rung them up to tell them how much we'd raised and I told them that they had to take some of the children to Lapland. I knew these children wanted to go from talking to them on our visit and I said provided they are well enough to travel you've got to take them. We'd taken Joseph to Lapland previously and it was such a magical place, I wanted these children to go. It was heartbreaking and heart warming at the same time to meet these children though and the real heroes are the people who work at the hospice looking after them, I take my hat off to them, they are absolutely amazing.

> Final question, how do you feel about comparisons between yourself and Dean to Stephanie McMahon and HHH?

Oh I don't mind if people want to say I'm like Stephanie, I'll accept that! I remember the one time HHH was walking to the ring and I said he's bound to win and Dean asked why. I said he's the bosses son in law, of course he'll win and Dean turned round and moaned, "Well that's never worked for me!"

I would like to thank both Letitia and her father Brian Dixon who were extremely accommodating in allowing this interview to take place whilst trying to run a show.

Also, if you would like to make a donation towards Derian House Hospice you can find a link from their website which is ***http://derianhouse.co.uk***

Orig Williams

Orig was what old school wrestling was all about. It was full of characters of which he certainly was one. Although I spent the majority of my wrestling career at Joint Promotions our paths crossed a lot in the early years. Yes our friend El Bandito made his mark on the wrestling world both as a wrestler and also a promoter. As a matter of fact my son Darren AKA Thunder wrestled in Ireland for Orig and has only had kind words about him. The last time I spoke to him was at a boxing match where our mutual friend Mark 'Rollerball' Rocco's son was fighting in Manchester. He will be sadly missed by the wrestling fraternity. He has gone to join the many boys from our wonderful business that have gone before us. May God bless them all. RIP.

Tony 'Banger' Walsh

When you talk about professional wrestling in Wales, one name readily springs to mind and that's Orig Williams. Orig had a long and illustrious career as a professional wrestler, a trainer and a promoter. Sadly on November 13th he passed away. Orig was far more than just an esteemed member of the wrestling industry, he was also prominent in many other fields and known throughout his beloved Welsh homeland.

Orig Williams was the son of a quarryman and was brought up in Ysbyty Ifan, near Betws y Coed. As a teen he attended a local boxing club on Saturdays and often attended church the following day with a bruise covered face that didn't always please the vicar.

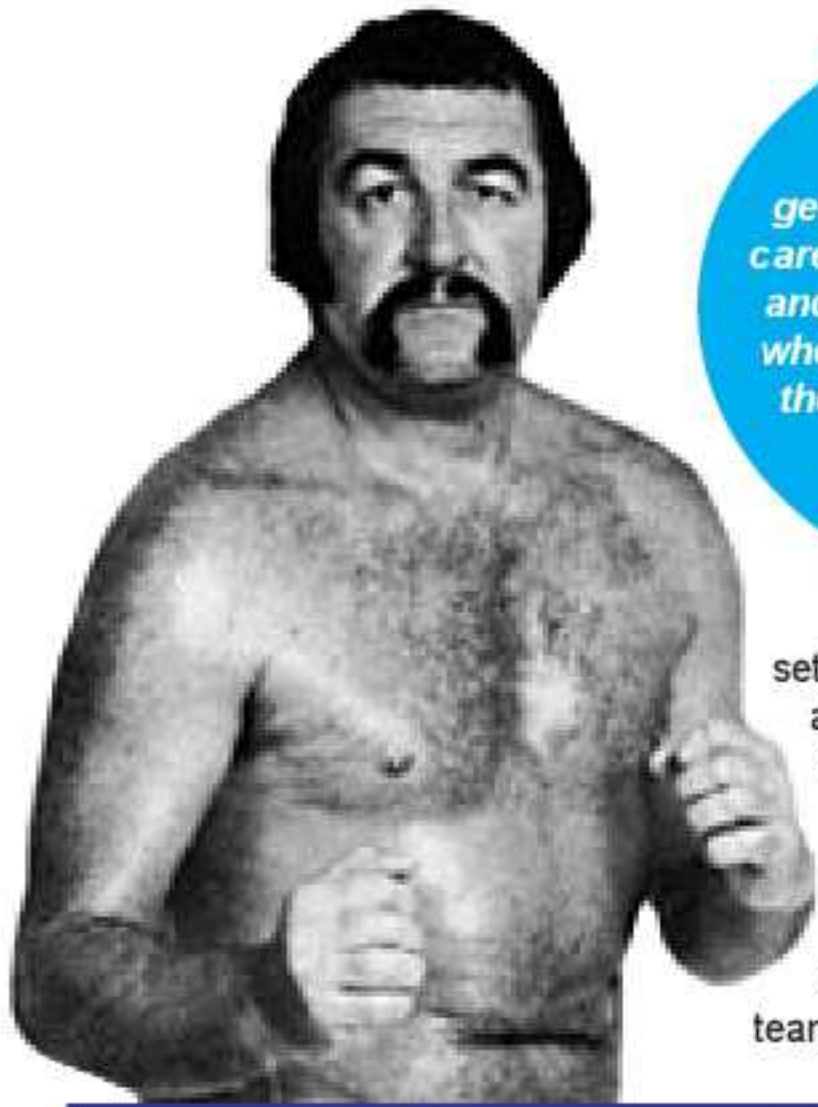
After his National Service in the RAF Orig became a professional footballer and played for Oldham and Shrewsbury as well as Pwllheli and Nanntlle Vale and became player manager of the Nantlle Vale team. Forever the Welsh patriot he

The very first time I met Orig williams I was in the "pit" (aptly named because it was a basement flat and it was painted deep purple with a mural of a black woman with a huge afro hairstyle, the mural was about 6' high and very impressive) in Rhyl, a stop over from Liverpool Stadium ready for another job somewhere in Wales, this would be late 1977. There at the invite of Crusher Mason, Orig walked in the pit took one look at me and said "hello who is this then?" Crusher told him I was a new girl and he looked me up and down and said "she'll never be a wrestler as long as she's got a hole in her arse"!! and promptly walked out of the pit saying "Crusher, Office".

Years later having been on his firm for many years he delighted in telling anyone who'd listen about the day he first met me in the pit and what he said to me. He always thought it was funny but he always said after how wrong he was about me and he was a blind old fool.

I have 1,000 memories of Orig – some funny, some scary and some I wouldn't dare repeat to anyone outside the wrestling circles. He was a bold, funny, cantankerous bugger who's voice put the fear of God in you if you had done something wrong, but what he also gave me was love, friendship, a roof over my head, a wrestling career and a wealth of knowledge of the wrestling business, all of which he didn't give out easily without earning it. He gave me some of the best days of my life, a chance to travel the world, fun, laughter and he taught me to take no shit from anyone. I will miss him with all my heart. He blessed many people's lives with his wit and stories that kept us entertained for hours. He always said he was the true Prince of Wales and I believe he was. He leaves us with memories to treasure forever and I for one will never forget him and what he and Wendy did for me. Love you Orig. Wherever you are I hope you are giving the buggers hell like only you can!

Klondyke Kate



Orig was an old school promoter who was a gentleman to work for. He took care of the boys and gave myself and Tommy a great opportunity when we were up and comers in the UK. He will be missed, RIP Orig and thank you.

Christopher Grey

set himself the target of building a team in which everyone could speak Welsh "for the simple reason that was the language of the community."

If Arsene Wenger complains about the physicality of some teams in the Premier League it's a good job Arsenal never had to face Nantlle Vale. Williams was often sent off and in one match the opposing teams goalkeeper walked off the pitch complaining about the rough style of the Nanttle forwards. The response of Orig was simply to say "we are a hard team and we play hard, they shouldn't take part if they don't like it."

Turning his attention to professional wrestling Orig became one of the best villains in the business. He wrestled under the name of 'El Bandito' – a name he picked up while touring in the States. In 1985 he published his autobiography 'Cario'r Ddraig' (Carrying the Dragon) and was a regular columnist for the Daily Post. He retired from the ring in 1991 but his contribution to the wrestling scene continued for many more years.

He was a promoter for over 45 years with shows featuring wrestlers such as Klondyke Bill, Count Bartelli and of course himself. He adopted the name of the British Wrestling Federation but his promoting wasn't restricted to our shores alone. He took squads of wrestlers all over the world entertaining fans. Nigeria, France, Kenya, India and Sweden were just a few of the countries his squads appeared in.

Along with Brian Dixon he kept the Independent circuit in the UK alive. He persuaded Adrian Street to quit Joint Promotions and also brought in stars such as Mighty John Quinn, Tony St. Clair, Mark Rocco and Johnny Saint. In 1982 he began promoting shows for the 'Reslo' series on S4C and included cage matches, chain matches and women's wrestling which weren't featured on 'World Of Sport.'

He was a great supporter of women's wrestling at a time when there were few opportunities. His stable included Klondyke Kate, Tina Starr, Rusty Blair and Carla Sanchez. Whereas Stu Hart had his infamous Dungeon in Canada, the Welsh equivalent was the Garage training facility at the back of Orig's house where only the toughest survived.

I worked for and greatly respected Orig for many years. Along with Brian Dixon, he kept Independent wrestling alive and well in big halls with big names on his bills. He frequently booked many of the Manchester lads for his shows and I always found him to be reliable and straight and with a good sense of fun that belied his El Bandito looks.

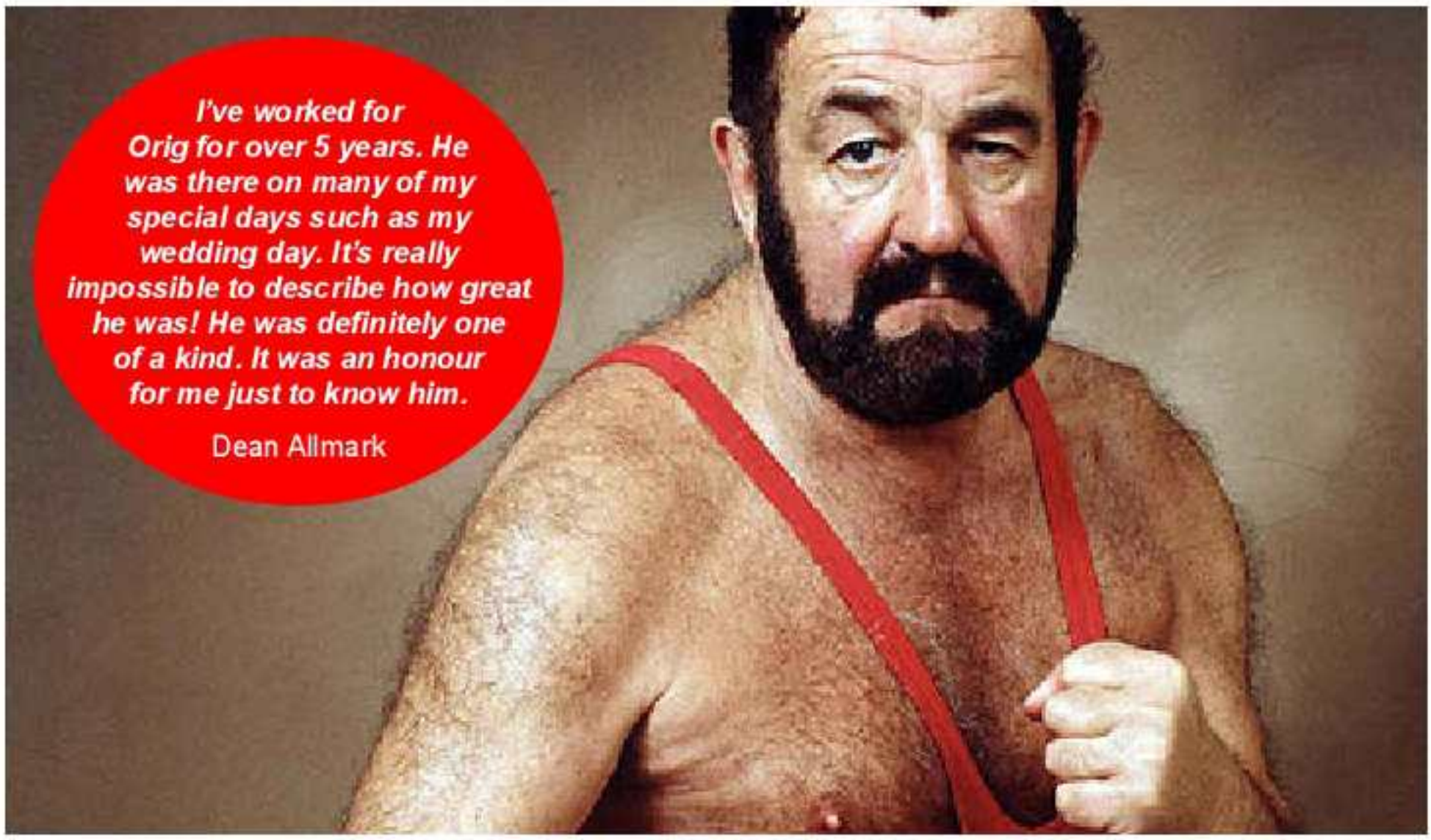
Eddie Rose

I had the pleasure of working with Orig in the UK and Zimbabwe. His enthusiasm for wrestling was second to none and Orig will be a sad loss to the wrestling profession and to all who knew him.

Mal Mason

I'm absolutely gutted by this news. Orig was my mentor and hero. He was a great, great man. I'm going to miss our weekly conversations deeply.

Alan Ravenhill



I've worked for Orig for over 5 years. He was there on many of my special days such as my wedding day. It's really impossible to describe how great he was! He was definitely one of a kind. It was an honour for me just to know him.

Dean Allmark

He also worked to promote young wrestlers, including organising bouts to raise money for Urdd national eisteddfod. His last show took place in Gwynedd on October 26th 2009. Orig must have been delighted this year when he heard the news that one of the wrestlers he trained, Barri Griffiths aka The Smackdown Warrior, and now Gladiator Goliath, had been signed up by WWE. Speaking about Orig, Barri said "He was the most colourful character I've ever met. This place won't be the same without him. He started me in wrestling and helped to take me to Gladiators and over to America." It's a real shame that Orig hasn't lived to see his protégé make his debut in WWE but I'm sure he'll be up there watching him and cheering every move.

His death brought a multitude of tributes including Deputy Minister Ienan Wyn Jones who said that "Orig made a significant contribution to Wales through sport and through his unique personality, and he will be greatly missed." Heritage Minister Alun Ffred Jones commented that "Wales will be a less colourful place without his unique personality."

His funeral took place in Rhyl on November 20th. Around 500 people paid their respects. Pallbearers included: Rocco, Tony St Clair, Brian Dixon, Peter Nulty and Goliath. Also attending was: Marty Jones, Carl Mc Grath, Roy St Clair, Joynson, George Burgess, Johnny Palance, Dave Finlay Snr, Mitzi, Letitia, Rusty Blair, Leather Lena, Johnny South, Nikki Munroe, Tanya, Klondyke Kate, Justin, Harry Palin, Clive Dunn, Boxer Johnny Rocco, John Kenny and Steve Taylor.

His family requested that male mourners wear colourful ties and female mourners any colour clothing they wished. His daughter, Tara Bethan, described her father as "a cultured man, much more than just a wrestler." In an eulogy his friend Rhys Jones said that Orig was a "strong man and nationalist who passionately loved Welsh culture, and who could equally reel out his favourite song lyrics, poetry or quotations from the Bible." The Welsh dragon flag draped Orig's casket and on it were red roses and a bouquet of white flowers. His body was interred at the new cemetery, Rhuddlan.

One of the best wrestling promoters of all time has passed away. I only did a few shows for you. But you will be sadly missed.

Matt Jarrett

Considered by many to be one of the major stars in British wrestling today, Martin Stone has been a central part in some of the most memorable and poignant moments that British wrestling has seen over the last few years.

Martin Stone

By DARREN WOOD - dtwooduk@hotmail.com

Stone was a wrestling fan from a very young age, it wasn't until he watched a match between Chris Benoit and Eddie Guerrero on Raw that he realised that wrestling was his calling in life.

The man who calls himself "The Guvnor" eventually found an advert for Dropkixx wrestling academy run by Tony and Dino Scarlo. "At Dropkixx there was no high spots it was just technical and on the mat wrestling," states Stone." Training with the Scarlo's taught me to take down a body part and work on it, which when I first started was a pretty big culture shock because I had been watching WWE and this was completely different."

Dropkixx wrestling academy gave him a great knowledge of the basics, "Once you can chain wrestle and you have a good understanding of the basics, I feel that as a wrestler your confidence will soar." While it was not exactly what Stone had been expecting, he continued training and eventually worked his first match a month after training had finished.

"I had a tag match and there were quite a lot of people there," recalls Stone. "I was quite overwhelmed by the size of the crowd and I wasn't ready for it. After the match I decided not to step back into the ring, in front of a crowd, until I knew exactly what I was doing. I spent a year and a half just training and really getting the basics together."

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Stone was then brought into the FWA which saw him pair up with Stixx to form the formidable tag team "Stixx and Stone". "I was a bit dubious and reluctant at first doing the tag team with that name but they convinced me and it worked. Under the tutelage of manager the "Twisted Genius" Dean Ayass, Stixx and Stone went on to capture the FWA tag team championship.

IPW: UK was the next step for Martin Stone and he soon struck gold, capturing their Heavyweight Championship by defeating Aviv Maayan. ***Over the course of the next 18 months Stone faced all-comers and held onto the belt in dominating fashion.***

It was at this time he started calling himself "The Guvnor". "One day I was in a book shop and I picked up the book "The Guvnor" by Larry Mclean," explains Stone. "That guy was a gentle giant when you were on his good side, but he could also be a vicious bastard. I incorporated the name after a match with Spud when I got on the microphone and said 'I walked in here the Enforcer but I am walking out as the Guvnor.' It has stuck with me ever since."

Stone eventually would lose the title to Andy 'Boy' Simmonz in 2006, but he returned and represented the IPW: UK in their war with the FWA. Flash Barker faced Stone in 2007, a match where the winner would shut down the other man's company, Stone prevailed and the FWA closed its doors.

Stone recalls his feelings of when the FWA closed "It was sad to see it end, it was obviously one of the biggest companies in the UK. That promotion pushed the new wave of British wrestling with guys like Jonny Storm, Jody Fleisch and obviously Doug Williams."

Two years on from its closure the FWA has now re-opened, Stone seems to be excited at the prospect of it becoming Britain's number one wrestling promotion again. "It can only do something good for British wrestling, any place that has as much history as that company did before it closed can only give a good kick up the backside for British wrestling. Hopefully we can do some good things with it."

Stone is realistic though and fully believes that for UK wrestling to maximise its potential it needs to be

on TV. "We were on ITV in the 1970's and 80's and it was immensely popular. So to be back on TV is absolutely key; the only way to make it marketable is if people see it. You can run all the shows you want until you are blue in the face, but unless it's seen by a mainstream market it's hard to sell tickets."

British wrestling is a subject that Stone feels passionate about, he realises that there have to be some major changes."British wrestling needs a massive injection," states Stone. "***I think the UK has some of the most underrated wrestlers in the world, the talent over here is off the chart.*** There is so much depth now and much more talented workers than there was five years ago."

Stone continues, "It's not a full time job in the UK, which I would love it to be, but from a professional standpoint people really should treat this as a job. They must be more professional; I do a number of shows and see a lot of guys who are like seven or eight stone, out of shape, wearing gym shorts or not even proper wrestling attire; it needs a governing body to regulate the people in the shows. Wrestlers too need to tighten up, get into better shape. Fans watch WWE and they see guys with impeccable physiques and that is what British wrestling needs to aspire to."

The future seems to be a bright one for "The Guvnor" as he strives to be the best in British wrestling. "I want to try and make it in this business; I have got to a level where I think I am ready to make it over in America as well. By the time I am 31 if I am not under contract it is time to walk away. I am not going to be one of these guys who hold onto every last opportunity."

WHAT WAS...?

It's the same old story at this time of year, you always get asked things like "What was your favourite Christmas present?" or " What's your favourite Christmas song?." Well, I thought I'd twist the Xmas questions a bit this time and asked some of the UK's top wrestlers for their take on my Xmas "what was..." questions.

| By PWPFROG - froggyllc@aol.com |
| Photos by TOM LANCASTER - www.wrestlingphotos.co.uk |

Marty Scurll - IPW

What do you remember the most about the first live wrestling show you ever attended?
It was an All-star show in Cambridge my home town. I was about 12 and I remember thinking the ring was tiny, and it was very pantomime. A lot of the guys who I saw I went on to work with though, like Chad Collyer (then Chad Malenko) and Jonny Storm.

What do you recall the most significantly about your debut match?
It was in a tiny working men's club in Essex, against one of my best friends, Jimmy Starr. There was about 40 people watching, but I loved it. The match went well for a first time and I remember being happy with it at the time.

What has been the worst prank played on you by another wrestler?
There's a lot of disgusting pranks that go on in wrestling but I'll tell a more - pleasant one.. I was on the road with a team of wrestlers, and we had a show in the day, and some of the boys on the team had a show for James Mason in the evening. I wasn't booked but had to go to the show as well as I was travelling with them in a 6 seater. The show had started and I stayed out and watched the first few matches, then just happened to go to the back to see how everyone was. A one Jay Knox came up to me and says 'Shouldn't you get ready?' I'm like, 'I'm not on' then I look at the bill and my match is next! Nobody even told me!

What has been your best experience in wrestling so far, whether in the ring or outside?
Meeting some of my best friends has been through the business so I am very grateful for that. As far as highlights go, when myself and Zack Sabre beat the Thrillers for the IPW tag titles in Sittingbourne was quite a moment. Not because we got given some prop belts, but because the crowd response was insane. Throughout the whole match we had the crowd eating it up and when we finally won the crowd went nuts, grown men jumping up and down out of their seats, in a world where people don't usually care who wins anymore. That was a real feel good moment. Debuting for

Dragongate UK was my career highlight so far though, an amazing night I was so happy to be a part of!

What would you do differently knowing what you do now?
If you mean at the start of my career, It would probably be training 10 times harder in the gym and dieting! I could be a lot bigger now. But that's just something I concentrate on now.

Timm Wylie - All Star

What do you remember the most about the first live wrestling show you ever attended?
I was very young and don't remember specifically which one it was, although it would have been WWF for sure. Most likely trying to touch the wrestlers as they came down the aisle haha, sounds kinda fruity now but I still see kids doing it all the time, even at shows I'm on, so I guess it's just what kids do!

What do you recall the most significantly about your debut match?
Trying not to be sick!!! My first few experiences in the ring were as a referee, I was 15 at the time, then at the end of the show, during an 8-man tag or battle royal, I would put on my 'wrestling gear' (or what I considered that at the time) and jump in.

Timm Wylie

I must have done about 4 or 5 of these before my first official match, and each time I was sick, but managed to swallow it and continue as normal. I don't know what it was, as I didn't feel particularly nervous, but the more it happened, the more I worried about it. A vicious circle. I had 3 matches that night, and wasn't sick once. Weird huh?

What has been the worst prank played on you by another wrestler?
I've actually been quite lucky in this area, touch wood. Orig Williams had me wear a mask when I worked for him, and it doesn't fit very tightly. Once in a royal rumble-type match, several of the veteran wrestlers kept turning it all the way round, then pounding me when I couldn't see. Other than that, and general ribbing when I've made mistakes, that's about it so far...

What has been your best experience in wrestling so far, whether in the ring or outside?
That's a tougher question. My trips abroad have been my best experiences so far, as I have always dreamed of travelling the world and being 'on the road' as a professional wrestler. Denmark and Germany were great fun, and I have started working for Catch Wrestling Stars in France recently, and the quality of events and the way the talent are treated are the best I have experienced.

What would you do differently knowing what you do now?
I would have started working for All Star wrestling years ago. I have learned so much and opened so many doors over the last 2 years due to working there. With some incredible wrestlers, and many veterans on their roster, I consider it the best training ground to truly hone your craft this country has to offer.

Dean Allmark - All Star

What do you remember the most about the first live wrestling show you ever attended?
The first show I ever went to was when I was about 6 or 7. I was on holiday in Rhyl with my

sister, my best mate at the time (Robbie Dynamite), his sister and his mum and dad. We when to watch the British wrestling in the coliseum on Rhyl Front. I remember there being a great atmosphere and seeing giant haystacks,Jonny South (L.O.D), Frank Casey and there was a chain match, I think it was Jonny Smith or Danny Collins against Dave 'fit' Finlay where there was blood and everything! LOL, I enjoyed the show so much.

What do you recall the most significantly about your debut match?
Don't really remember that much to be honest. I was only just 16 at the time. I remember before I went in someone telling me to tuck my lace into my wrestling boots, it may have been Ian Wilson? But that's always stuck with me for some reason. After the match I remember icing my elbow which had a huge lump on it. I had landed really hard on it during the finish and it didn't half sting.

What has been the worst prank played on you by another wrestler?
When I was about 17 I was away for the week wrestling on the Butlins camps and a few other town shows and on the first day while I was in the ring somebody had taken the lace's out of my trainers. So I had to take the lace's out of my boots and put them in my trainers which I thought was pretty clever. The next day I'm in the ring wrestling, I get back and my trainers have gone! So for the rest of the week I had to walk around and go to the night club's in my bright red shiny wrestling boots! They strangely turned up on the way home on the last day. That's just one of the million pranks I had played on me since I stared wrestling.

What has been your best experience in wrestling so far, whether in the ring or outside?
That's a really tough question because I've had so many. But here's a few. Wrestling for TNA in America in 2004 was a good trip. I wrestled in Euro Disney in 2003. I met my now wife though wrestling. Wrestling in matches with the likes of Tatanka, Jake 'The Snake' Roberts, Danny Collins and so many more.

What would you do differently if you knew what you know now?
I have no regrets, I wouldn't change a thing.

The Judge - WAR

What do you remember the most about the first live wrestling show you ever attended?
The Undertaker's Entrance at the NEC Birmingham.

What do you recall the most significantly about your debut match?
Performing the worst leg drop in history. Apparently you're not supposed to take a back bump...

What has been the worst prank played on you by another wrestler?
They wouldn't dare :)

What has been your best experience in wrestling so far, whether in the ring or outside?
CM Punk cooking eggs on my mums stove is right up there... personally, my match with Colt Cabana was pretty cool. Such a good guy and real easy to work.

What would you do differently knowing what you do now?
Less is more (such a cliche) and kneepads ARE essential when you do splashes.

Tomcat Kevin O'Neil - Future Championship Wrestling

What do you remember the most about the first live wrestling show you ever attended?
The first live wrestling show I saw was at a holiday camp in Great Yarmouth. There was about two matches in a tiny ring with a very, very low ceiling. One of the wrestlers was called the Terminator and wore a black leather jacket and shades!

What do you recall the most significantly about your debut match?
It was August 21st, 1998, at the Bath Pavilion where myself and Excalibur sort of blagged our way onto the show after saying we had more experience than we actually had, so we were both really nervous. I remember one of the fans stating that "a girl could punch harder than you," but I think that was Mad Eli so that doesn't count!

What has been the worst prank played on you by another wrestler?
Not so much more of a prank but a self inflicted incident. Back in 2000 I was working for BRAWL in Northampton and was suffering from quite severe back pain. Before every match I had I used to rub deep heat into my back to loosen the muscles. I'm sure that I washed it off of my hands before going to the toilet but it took at least three bottles of water to douse that particular flame!

What has been your best experience in wrestling so far, whether in the ring or outside?
As corny as it sounds, having met such great people over the years, many of whom I can call good friends and getting to wrestle in many

different locations that I wouldn't have otherwise thought about visiting. I mean, why else would I go to Yate?!

What would you do differently knowing what you do now?
I wish I'd taken advantage of some of the opportunities that were presented to me at the time. I could probably have gone full time pro wrestling after offers of going on the holiday camps etc but decided that I wanted to spend more time at home. After Marc Hogan and myself started Future Championship Wrestling it just became more comfortable to stay close to home.

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By DARREN WOOD
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THE UK KID

The self proclaimed "International superstar" may seem egotistical but a mere eighteen-year-old made the brave leap stateside and landed deep in the barren heart of Texas; to be christened by the one and only Shawn Michaels, as The UK Kid.

The UK Kid dreamt of Smackdown stardom since the age of 14. "I thought anything is possible if I really wanted it, I grew up watching guys like Hogan and Warrior wishing I could do what they do."

Two years later an underwhelmed UK Kid sat watching a "terrible" Premier Promotions show in Gosport. "I thought I could fight better than the wrestlers on that show, for a fan to think that isn't good. Wrestling is meant to be a spectacle, larger than life."

One aspirational letter to an address off the back of the 50p program was the key to training with UK grappler Kris Kay. "Training with Kris served a purpose, it opened a door and I wouldn't be here today without it. He got me my first matches, which I am grateful for. Mostly Kris taught me how to take a beating, he's a big lad. "However the trail was going cold, I didn't seem to be moving forwards, he was unable to teach me what I wanted to know and shortly into my career I was already in a rut."

The UK Kid saw his opportunity to strut down to the ring, emblazoned on the back of a t-shirt. It was the telephone number for the Texas Wrestling Academy (TWA) run by the same man who wore it. HBK, the Heartbreak Kid. "I missed the number first time around, so I had to wait for the 2am repeat. When I called the number; his mum answered and asked me to send a tape. I did so but wasn't accepted as I was only 17; however she said I could join at 18."

He then slaved over two full time jobs, trying to rack up the hefty $4,000 fee; he finally turned 18 and flew to America to live the dream. However when the dream became reality, the road was paved with blood, sweat and bird shit.

"It nearly killed me, the TWA was great, it was like an old warehouse, broken wooded flooring and broken windows which let the birds in; they crapped everywhere all over the ropes, the rings and the floors. The toilets were unusable, you wanted to puke but the bowls were so full, like in some horror story, god knows how I didn't catch anything."

The UK Kid never told his family of the true hardships in the Texas desert, with no furniture, no food and no money. "It seemed the right thing to do at the time, we trained 3-4 times a day - there was so much cardiovascular training and in that Texas heat it was no good for anyone. Shawn's training was about being fit and in shape and ready to take on the world, it was the hardest but greatest thing I have done."

Michaels ran a tight ship, stayed in great shape and never missed a beat; often leaping into the ring to show the rookies the ropes. Even after a year out of the squared circle, the priceless wisdom that gave him the edge never left him. "One day he was showing us punches and jabbed a guy we called Tony Jabroni on the chin, I don't know if Shawn connected on purpose or just wanted to show a stiff one but Tony looked like he was going to cry. Shawn just turned his back while chewing tobacco and said 'that's the wrestling business kid, suck it up' and walked away. "

THE TOILETS WERE UNUSABLE, YOU WANTED TO PUKE BUT THE BOWLS WERE SO FULL

The TWA was geared towards profit just as much as creating new stars, they were never picky about who they let in. "I don't think Shawn liked this, he wanted to give back to the business. A lot of crap was coming through the doors, he had his favourites and when they left he came around less."

After graduating the TWA with the basics under his belt, The UK Kid moved onto the Funkin Conservatory where he continued to learn under the guidance of WWE hall of famer Dory Funk Jnr. "Dory was more old school, he explained a lot of TV stuff mainly to maximise the camera, so our limited TV time could be used to its full potential. That is the kind of stuff that separates guys who make it. The Funkin Conservatory was a palace compared to the TWA, it doubled as the TV venue and training facility so had to be kept spotless.

Looking back at his time in training The UK Kid felt he gained most from the TWA, however he still valued his time at the Funkin Conservatory. Although he never felt Michaels ever instilled any particular style on him, D'Lo Brown once remarked "You have Michaels written all over you, the way you move."

Now The UK Kid runs Varsity Pro Wrestling (VPW) based in Portsmouth and tries to pass on the knowledge he has gained from the legends, by making "every moment mean something instead of going through the motions, like a lot of UK wrestlers who are mostly crap."

Since its birth VPW has shown to be a thriving company and has grown in stature among the UK wrestling scene, now raking in a crowd of almost a thousand strong across the south and west of England, but The UK Kid still thinks the company can strive for more.

"When we started we were getting 40 people in a school hall, now we draw almost a thousand people to the shows, this is great for UK wrestling. However in the grand scheme of things we are still not matching the 20,000 attending Portsmouth football club week in week out.

It seems the more former WWE wrestlers we use the better attendances we get and if we get better figures it will mean we can use more WWE wrestlers on future shows. The fans like seeing the former WWE guys because they are used to seeing them on TV, at the moment it seems to be a good progressive cycle."

The UK Kid is looking forward to the future and is confident about his ambitions. "I would like to be working full time in the WWE, I am young and have plenty of time for that. I would like to be the guy who is running the number one wrestling company in the UK and for VPW to gain a national TV deal.

We continue to use the former WWE stars as it is integral to clinching the TV deal we require, so far we have had a lot of interest from a host of channels."

So is the self proclaimed "International Superstar" egotistical? Just one glance at his career so far includes some of the most recognised names in wrestling history, working with one of the biggest British wrestling companies. With all these accolades behind him, perhaps The UK Kid will finally storm stateside once again and become the true International Superstar he has always dreamed of being.

Left: UK Kid taunting the crowd.

Below: Delivering a chairshot to Kip (Billy Gunn).

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